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ŚRĪ RĀMA IN ART, ARCHAEOLOGY & LITERATURE

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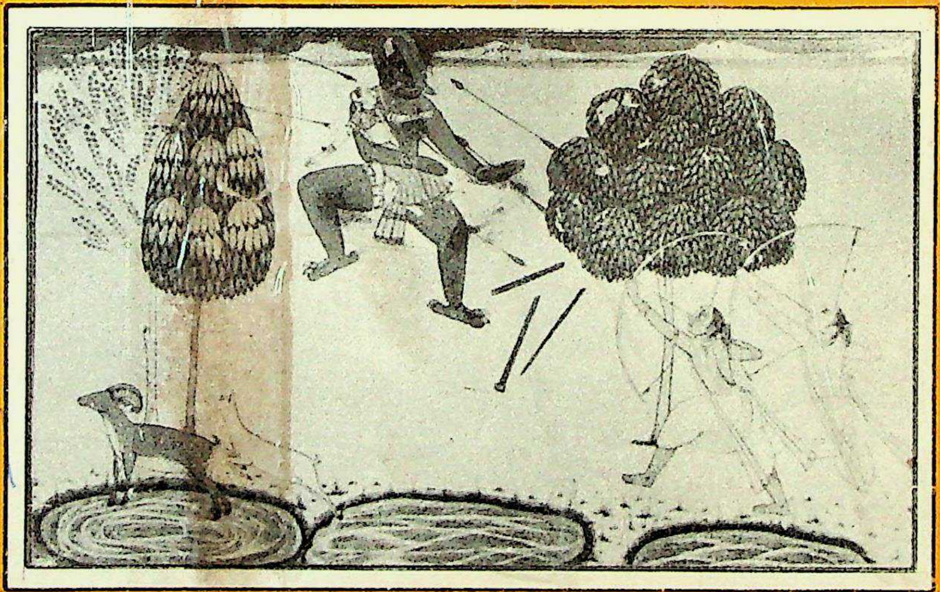

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ŚRĪ RĀMA IN ART, ARCHAEOLOGY AND LITERATURE

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EDITOR

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लखनऊ

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EDITOR'S PREFACE

The Bihar Puravid Parishad organised a national seminar on 'Śrī Rāma in Art, Archaeology and Literature' on 2nd and 3rd March, 1987. Recent archaeological excavations at Ramayanic sites like Ayodhya, Nandigram, Bhārdwāja Āshrama and Śringaverapura have created a stir among the common people and the historians and even among the archaeologists. The main reason is that traditions backed by both secular and religious literature have placed Śrī Rāma at least one Yuga before Lord Kṛshṇa. But, while the sites traditionally associated with the Mahābhārata like Hastināpur, Mathura, Kurukshetra region have revealed cultures datable to prior to 700 B.C. and going as early as the later half of the 2nd millennium B. C. the excavated Ramayanic sites do not go much beyond 700 B. C.; the excavated Ramayanic sites are younger in date to the Mahābhārata sites. This astounding archaeological fact appears to put the entire traditional and Epic literature almost upside down— *ultapulta*. This led to intense soul-searching and critical rethinking about the whole problem of not only relative chronology but also of the cultural data available in different fields of literature and art-forms. The Seminar was expected to place on record all the relevant and up-to-date data about history and culture with Śrī Rāma in the centre.

The response of scholars from different parts of the country to our invitation was overwhelming and as many as 33 scholars contributed papers and 81 scholars participated in the discussions. Prof B. B. Lal, former Director-General of Archaeological Survey of India, and the excavator of the Ramayanic sites, delivered the key-note address and very succintly placed before the learned scholars the results of his excavations which go against the generally accepted view of relative chronology of Rāma and Kṛshṇa. The juxtaposition of the archaeological evidence and literary data has been exa-

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mined by Dr. B. P. Sinha who has pointed out the incompatibility of the archaeological evidence with the literary material and traditional beliefs. Prof. R. C. Gaur in his own imitable way examines critically the Rāmāyaṇa episodes and its antiquity and suggests that the entire episode happened much earlier in the land of the Saptasindhava and was later but not much earlier than 700 B. C. transplanted in the region of Ayodhya. Dr. Vijay Kumar Thakur and Prof. K.D. Bajpeyee discussed the historicity of Rāmāyaṇa as known from literature. Dr. A. K. Chatterji, writing on the identification of Mithilā, challenges Cunningham and proposes Kesariya in Champaran to be the location of the ancient city of Mithilā. But to Sri Rampukar Singh Chechar and its neighbouring villages represent the Ramayanic cities of Viśālāpurī and Mithilā. Sri Krishnadeva has dwelt upon the sculptural representations of the Ramayanic episodes. Dr. N. R. Bannerjee has thrown interesting light on Ahalyā in literature and art, and on the chronology of the Epic. Prof. B. N. Puri discusses the spread of Rāma legend in Central Asia and comments on the Khotanese and Tibetan versions of the Rāmāyaṇa. Srimati Sandhya Rao dilates on the impact of Rāma's story on the Lava-Jongrang temple-complex of Java. Manindra Chandra Nandi Professor Dr. V. C. Srivastava develops the theme further in his synoptic survey of the Rāma-tradition in South-East Asia. Prof. A. V. Narasimha Murthy gives a refreshing insight into the popularity of the Rāma legend in Karnataka art and literature. Dr. C. P. Sinha discusses the sculptural data pertaining to the Rāma-story in Bihar and Dr. R. C. Agarwal in his scholarly article reviews the depiction of Rāma legend in the ancient art of Rajasthan. Dr. Kamala Giri restricts herself to Rāmakathā scenes in the Dadhimati temple at Goth Manlad in Rajasthan. Dr. Nisar Ahmad in his off-beat discourse points out the depiction of the Rāmāyaṇa scenes on the medieval coins. Hanuman and Rāvaṇa on Indian art are the subject-matter of delineation by Dr. (Mrs.) Pushpa Sinha and Dr Nilkantha Joshi. Manjusri Rao describes depiction of Ramayanic scenes in the Gupta art and Sri Umesh Chandra Dwivedi takes up

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some important Gupta terracotta-plaques bearing scenes from the Rāma-story. Dr. Om Prakash Pandey attempts a critical appreciation of the Rāma-story depicted in the Sarnath art. Dr. Bhagwan Singh makes a general survey of painting and sculpture with reference to the theme of the Rāmāyaṇa. Dr. Biswas confines himself to the detailed discussion of the scenes of Abduction of Śīta as depicted in paintings preserved in Bharata Kala Bhavan, Varanasi. Rāma in the Buddhist literature and art has been discussed by Dr. C. S. Upasak. Dr. Jagannath Pal ploughs the lonely furrow in airing his views about Rāma being a prehistoric personality.

Besides the above scholars, Prof. Anand Krishana presented his paper on 'Rāmāyaṇa Themes in Indian Paintings (14th to 16th century)', Dr. Shivaji Singh, on the topic 'Rāmāyaṇa Archaeology and Some Observations'; Dr. L. K. Tripathi on the topic 'Rāmāyaṇa in Raghuvaṁśa'; Dr. S. P. Shukla on 'Representation of Rāma in Art'; Late Gopi Krishna Kanoria on 'Shri Rāma in Rāmāyaṇa'; Dr. P S. Shrivastava on 'Rāma Katha Men Hanuman ka Charitra' and Dr. Joachim Bantze, Associate Professor, Institute of Indology and Indian Philosophy, Berlin (West Germany) on the topic 'Rāma as depicted in the Bundi painting.' But even after our best efforts, we could not get their papers and, therefore, these papers could not be included in this volume.

The above list of articles with the gists would show the various angles with which scholars have discussed the theme of the Seminar, and thus have emphasized if any such emphasis was necessary, that Rāma tradition has permeated almost every aspect of Indian activity— history and art—, and even overflowed into lands near and distant whereever Indians went to live.

I hope this volume will be welcomed in the world of scholarship and the Parishad will feel encouraged to organise some more seminars on allied themes of our hoary traditions, still eluding a definite body of flesh and blood in a fixed time-frame.

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There have been many typological errors, for which indulgence is saught.

Thanks are due to the officers of Bihar Puravid Parishad especially Dr. P.C. Prasad, Dr. C.P. Sinha and Sri U.C. Dwivedi for the volume seeing light of the day, rather in good time.

Patna,
March, 1989.

B. P. Sinha

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बिहार की कला में हनुमान—श्रीमती पुष्पा सिन्हा

हनुमान, अन्तिचक, भागलपुर,

पालकालीन गुप्तशिल्प में रामायणी दृश्य—मंजू श्रीराव

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श्री अरुण पाठक, भा०प्र०से०, संरक्षक, बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् का स्वागत भाषण

माननीय मंत्री जी, प्रो० बी० बी० लाल, प्रो० पुरी, प्रो० बी० पी० सिन्हा, श्री कृष्णदेव साहब और अन्य विद्वतजन ! आज जो यहाँ बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् के तरफ से संगोष्ठों का आयोजन किया गया है, उसमें शरीक होने आये विद्वानों का स्वागत करने के लिये मैं खड़ा हुआ हूँ। बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् कोई बहुत पुरानी संस्था नहीं है। लेकिन इस दौरान जो भी हमलोग थोड़ा कार्य कर सके हैं, उसके आधार पर मैं यह कह सकता हूँ कि यह संस्था काफी उन्नति करेगी। मैं इस संस्था से जुड़ गया हूँ और उसी हैसियत से मैं आज यहाँ आया हुआ हूँ। कुछ समय पहले हमलोगों ने हड़प्पन संस्कृति और उसकी लिपि के ऊपर एक सेमिनार का आयोजन कराया था और आज फिर राष्ट्रीय स्तर का सेमिनार हमलोग रामायण पर कर रहे हैं। मेरा इस सभा में ज्यादा बोलना मायने नहीं रखता है क्योंकि जो विद्वान् आये हैं, वे अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में विश्व ख्याति प्राप्त कर चुके हैं। परन्तु एक अल्पज्ञ की हैसियत से मैं दो-तीन बातों की तरफ आपका ध्यान आकर्षित करना चाहूँगा कि रामायण हमलोगों के साहित्य का ही अंग नहीं, हमलोगों के सामाजिक जीवन का एक अंग बन गया है। काफी लम्बे समय से रामायण की कथा विभिन्न विद्वानों ने लिखी है, चाहे एक रूप में चाहे दूसरे रूप में, चाहे एक भाषा में, चाहे दूसरी भाषा में। यह कथा आज अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय महत्व प्राप्त कर चुकी है। वैसे तो आज भी अनेक तरह की कहानियाँ लिखी जाती हैं, किन्तु कोई भी ऐसी कहानी नहीं है, जिसको मनुष्य कह सके कि बिल्कुल नई है। किसी-न-किसी रूप में यह पहले भी कही जा चुकी है। लेकिन रामायण के पात्र और उसके नाम एक जमाने से एक ही रूप से दुनिया के विभिन्न देशों में चले आ रहे हैं। यह रामायण की एक अलग विशेषता है। मुझे नहीं मालूम कि रामायण, जब हमारा समाज एकदम औद्योगिक हो जायेगा तो क्या रूप लेगा। वैसे तो आपलोग सुनते होंगे कि कलयुग रामायण की कथा भी लोग कहते हैं, परन्तु उसमें मूल तत्व खत्म हो जाता है। परन्तु कल-कारखानों का जो एक वातावरण है, उसमें रामायण का कहाँ तक महत्व है, यह यह विचारणीय है।

वैसे तो किसी भी पुरातात्विक संगठन का किसी भी विषय पर जब सेमिनार होता है, उसका बहुत ही स्थानीय महत्व रहता है। लेकिन रामायण एक ऐसी रचना है, जिसका महत्व हमारे देश में बहुत व्यापक है। हिन्दुस्तान के हर कोने में यह इस तरह बिछी हुई है कि चाहे इस सेमिनार का आयोजन बिहार में हो या हिन्दुस्तान के किसी और कोने में, उसका महत्व वही है। लेकिन इस हिसाब से मुझे खुशी है कि बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् ने प्रयत्न कर दूसरा आयोजन किया है।

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मैं मन्त्री महोदय का शुक्रगुजार हूँ, वे यहाँ आये हैं, हमलोग का इससे हौसला बढ़ा है। मैं खासतौर पर बाहर से आये हुए विद्वानों को धन्यवाद देना चाहता हूँ कि उन्होंने इतना कष्ट उठाकर यहाँ पर आने की कृपा की है। इतने अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय ख्याति के विद्वान् एक साथ एक जगह इकट्ठा हों, किसो भी संस्था के लिये यह बड़े गौरव की बात है। इसलिये मैं परिषद् की तरफ से आपलोगों का शुक्रगुजार हूँ कि आपलोगों ने अपना बहुमूल्य समय दिया और पटना और बिहार आप आये। आपने हमारी संस्था की जो हौसला-अफजाई की, उसके लिये मैं आपको धन्यवाद देता हूँ। मैं आपलोगों का स्वागत करता हूँ और आशा करता हूँ कि परिषद् की ओर से आपलोगों के सत्कार में कोई कमी नहीं रह पायेगी और यदि कमी रह जाये तो उसे नजर अन्दाज कर देंगे।

मैं एक बार फिर मंत्री महोदय का स्वागत करता हूँ कि उन्होंने यहाँ पर आने की कृपा को है।

धन्यवाद !

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INAUGURAL ADDRESS BY PROF. B. N. PURI, HEAD OF THE DEPTT. OF ANCIENT INDIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE, LUCKNOW UNIVERSITY, LUCKNOW

Friends ! as desired by my esteemed friend Prof. B. P. Sinha that I should talk to you by the way of this inaugural address in English, not for I have any fascination for this language, but for the reasons I do not know. Since it is a mandate from him, I shall follow it in letter and spirit.

I am not a stranger to this place or this state of Bihar. I am one of you. I have my association with this land for the last fifty years. Some people know that since I am married in Bihar, therefore, I am a part of this place and my children too were born in Bihar at Hazaribagh and, therefore, I naturally claim some sort of familiarity or rather close familiarity with this state and when I have come here just to felicitate my esteemed friend and oldest colleague Prof. B. P. Sinha, I feel, I am honouring myself.

As regards the subject of the Rāmāyaṇa seminar, it is not at a localised interest, it is something which has wide spectrum, which has crossed international borders from Central Asia across the Himalayas, upto Indonesia in South-East Asia. There have been recensions of the Rāmāyaṇa in Khotanese, in the Tibetan, in the Mangolian and even in the Kamluk, the language of Siberia. Translation of the abstracts from the Rāmāyaṇa, some people suggest, may have been from Buddhist Jātakas specially of the Dasaratha Jātaka, but I doubt it very much. Story of the Rāmāyaṇa is available in the Chinese. In the South-East Asia the Rāmāyaṇa has been most popular. There have been recensions in the Vietnamese; there has been recension in the Siamese; there has been a recension in the Javanese as well as in old Sanskrit, even in

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Cylone, even in Burma also. Now what is strange is that the legend, the Epic, has found such a wider horizon, should have been ignored at the hands of some, who try to find out that it has hardly any historical veracity. I do not know and do not want to talk on the subject from that point of view, but personally I feel that the Rāmāyaṇa is not only a matter of historicity or historical veracity, but it is something which has become a part of our life. It brings to our life something which brings the spirit of human beings of universalism and it is in that spirit we have to honour the legend of Rāma and the Rāmāyaṇa. Then I do not wish to stand between you and two learned discourses one to be made by Prof. B. B. Lal, another friend and equally a colleague of mine for more than fortyfive years. We were together at Taxila while undergoing training in the field archaeology; and Shri Krishana Deva, who is also of that standing and of my age. We all are septuagenarians. I have crossed seventy and that probably is the only factor which might have weighed with the organisers of the seminar in asking me to inaugurate. I am probably the seniormost professor. I am of seventytwo years. I feel that Rāma nāma is the only thing in this world and the rest is fragile. I think it has saved me from all those things and I have drawn strength from it in my life and I am therefore in a position to come over here and talk to you on this subject.

I think that it is not something merely of the national interest but it is something international to be proud of. It is something of wider spectrum, wider horizon and of wider interest. The scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa, the actors may be different, but Rāma, Lakshmaṇa, Hanumāna and even Sītā can be seen in the manuscripts in Central Asia which are still buried and have not seen the light except slight references from Prof. Bailley in the Journal of the American Oriental Society and then it is published in the Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society. and other authors have also written which have been noticed in Pillow's collection which has been in Bibliograghic

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National Law. Then my teacher and professor, now dead, Prof. E. W. Thompson brought to light the Tibetan version of Rāmāyaṇa. As regards South-East Asia, lot of work has been done and of late lot of interest has been created and generated in the Central Asia by a good number of Soviet scholars.

With these few words by way of introduction, I have the greatest pleasure in inaugurating the seminar and also in felicitating my esteemed friend whom I may say my younger brother, if not brother-in-law, Prof. B. P. Sinha.

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श्री अर्जुन विक्रमशाह, राज्य मंत्री, युवा कार्य, खेल एवं संस्कृति विभाग, बिहार एवं समारोह के मुख्य अतिथि का अभिभाषण।

इस समारोह के अध्यक्ष श्री कृष्णदेव जी, डा० पुरी जी, डा० बी० पी० सिन्हा, प्रो० बी० बी० लाल जी और बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् के संरक्षक श्री अरुण पाठक जी एवं बाहर से आये विद्वान सज्जन।

मुझे आपलोगों के बीच आने में इसलिये हिचकिचाहट हो रही थी कि इतने विद्वानों के सामने मैं क्या कहूँ? चूँकि शायद मैं इस विभाग का मन्त्री हूँ, हो सकता है उसी लिहाज से, किसी विद्वान् के रूप में नहीं, मुझे बोलने के लिये यहाँ बुलाया गया है। मुझे ऐसा लगता है कि इस विद्वन् समाज में जिस चीज की चर्चा बहुत पैमाने पर हो रही है और इतने विद्वान बाहर से आये हैं और विषय भी इतना गहन है Śri Rāma in Art, Archaeology and Literature तो ऐसी चीज में मैं आपलोगों से क्या निवेदन करूँ। मगर दो-चार बातें हैं जिसे मैं कहना चाहूँगा। वैसे तो आप सभी विद्वान् हैं, आपने काफी पढा-लिखा है, आपलोगों को जानकारी होगी कि कुछ लोग रामायण की कथा लिजेन्ड के तौर पर मानते हैं, तो कुछ लोग इसे इतिहास के तौर पर मानते हैं। मगर जो भी हो, जिस तरीके से रामायण, खासकर डॉ० पुरी जी ने जैसा हमें बताया रामायण मध्य एशिया में, दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया में, और भारत के पडोसी देशों में खासकर नेपाल में, भूटान में, तिब्बत में, बर्मा में, इन्डोनेशिया में, थाईलैन्ड आदि अनेक देशों में एवं रूस के कुछ हिस्सों में इस तरीके से यह चीज बहुत दिनों से फैली हुई है, जिससे कि हम इसके बारे में बहुत कुछ समझ सकते हैं। इसके महत्व को जान सकते हैं।

रामायण जिसका चारों तरफ फैलाव है और खासकर के हमारे भारत में केवल एक ही रूप में नहीं देखकर सामाजिक रूप में जब हम इसे देखते हैं तब हम पाते हैं कि सामाजिक जीवन में यह हमसे किस तरह जुड़ा हुआ है। इससे जाहिर होता है कि हम इससे कितने गहराई में जुड़े हुए हैं।

मैं खासकर के बिहार पुराविद् परिषद को धन्यवाद देता हूँ कि इस तरीके का एक आयोजन कर, इस भाग-दौड़ की दुनिया में, चमक-दमक की दुनिया में जहाँ बहुत तरह के आयोजन होते रहे हैं वहाँ विद्वानों और विद्वत् समाज को परिषद् ने इकट्ठा किया है, खासकर के देश के कोने-कोने से। इसमें पाठकजी ने बहुत दिलचस्पी ली है।

मैंने इसके पहले भी पाठक जी से आग्रह किया था कि क्यों नहीं बिहार में भी, हम, जिस तरह एशियाटिक सोसाइटी ऑफ बंगाल, कलकत्ता में हैं, उसी तरह इस

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बिहार पुराविद् परिषद् को भी उसी पैमाने पर लाये ताकि बिहार में जो बहुत सारी चीजे हैं, उस पर विशेष रूप से और बेहतर ढंग से काम हो सके। मैं पुराविद् परिषद् को अपने मन्त्रालय और सरकार की तरफ से यह आश्वासन देना चाहता हूँ कि अगर इस तरह का कोई प्रस्ताव आए तो हम अवश्य इस विषय में आगे की कारवाई करेंगे।

मैं इन्हीं शब्दों के साथ में आप विद्वत समाज का अभिनन्दन करता हूँ और मैं आशा करता हूँ कि आपके इस आगमन से हमें नई रोशनी मिलेगी और बिहार का जो गौरव है, उसे और प्रतिष्ठापित करने का मौका मिलेगा।

धन्यवाद !

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KEY–NOTE ADDRESS

by Professor B. B. Lal

(*Former Director General, Archaeological Survey of India*)

1. INTRODUCTION

I am indeed most grateful to the authorities of the Bihar Purāvid Parishad for having invited me to participate in this seminar. This gives me an opportunity not only of meeting once again so many distinguished scholars, colleagues and friends, but also of listening to their views on the subject. On my part, I will place most humbly before this august audience what the spade has revealed during the course of my field-work at various sites associated with the Rāmāyaṇa story, although I am conscious that the facts so revealed may not be quite savoury to some. Anyway, that is always the fate of one who chooses to traverse a thorny path or touches the hornets' nest.

But before I come to the dull and dreary results of my excavations, let me give expression to my own concept of Śrī Rāma. To me he has two aspects. In one of these, He is God Himself, the constant rememberance of whose name (*nāma-japa*) makes one transcend the dualities of human existence and attain Supreme Bliss. The true devotee, through the Grace of Śrī Rāma, merges in Him who is *Sat, Chit* and *Ānanda*. I have no second thought about it.

If one wishes to have an idea of Śrī Rāma as God, one has only to visit Ayodhyā on the occasion of Rāma-Navamī. Indeed, if one were to take an aerial photograph of Ayodhyā on that occasion, I am sure one would not see on those photographs any of the streets in the town, since millions of people are on the move occupying every inch of space. And, mind you, most of these people would have walked down scores of miles the previous day, with little *potalīs* (bundles) on their heads, just to have the Lord's *darshan*. (I am afraid there is no equi-

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valent word in the English language which can express the all-inclusive meaning of this Sanskrit term.) *That* Śrī Rama is Eternal, without any beginning or end.

The second aspect of Śrī Rāma is that of a human being who was born to Kauśalyā (wife of Dasaratha), was married to Sītā, was exiled for fourteen years, defeated Rāvaṇa, the ruler of Laṅkā, came back to Ayodhyā and ruled over the Kosala territory as the successor of his father. In this aspect he is to be envisaged as having lived in flesh and blood, just as the Buddha and Mahāvīra had lived.

This Rāma was an ideal man, *Maryādā Purushottama.* His life and deeds have inspired a large number of literary works, beginning with the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki. Other notable works are the *Uttara Rāmacarit* of Bhavabhūti, the *Raghuvanśa* of Kālidāsa, the *Rāmacarita Mānasa* of Tulsi Das, which is read and sung in almost every household in northern India, the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Kamban dominating the South, and even as recent works as the *Sāketa* of Rashtra-kavi Maithili Sharan Gupta. The theme has inspired sculptures, paintings and various other forms of arts, including the performing ones. Even whole temples were devoted to the theme in sculptures, for example the Hazāra Rāma Temple at Hampi in Karnataka. In paintings there is perhaps no school—be it the Kāngrā style of the Himalayas or the Nāyaka School of South India, or the Bikaner School on the west or even the Murshidabad School of the Mughal times—which has not done justice to the theme. Indeed, it is a pleasant surprise to find the depiction of Śri Rāma and Sītā on silver coins (pl. I) of the great Mughal emperor Akbar who issued them during the last years of his reign. And in performing arts : the life of Śri Rāma (*Rāma-līlā*) is enacted very year in almost every nook and corner of the country. In fact, even the small screen has taken to it most seriously and successfully. It gives immense satisfaction to watch every Sunday morning the serial on the T. V.

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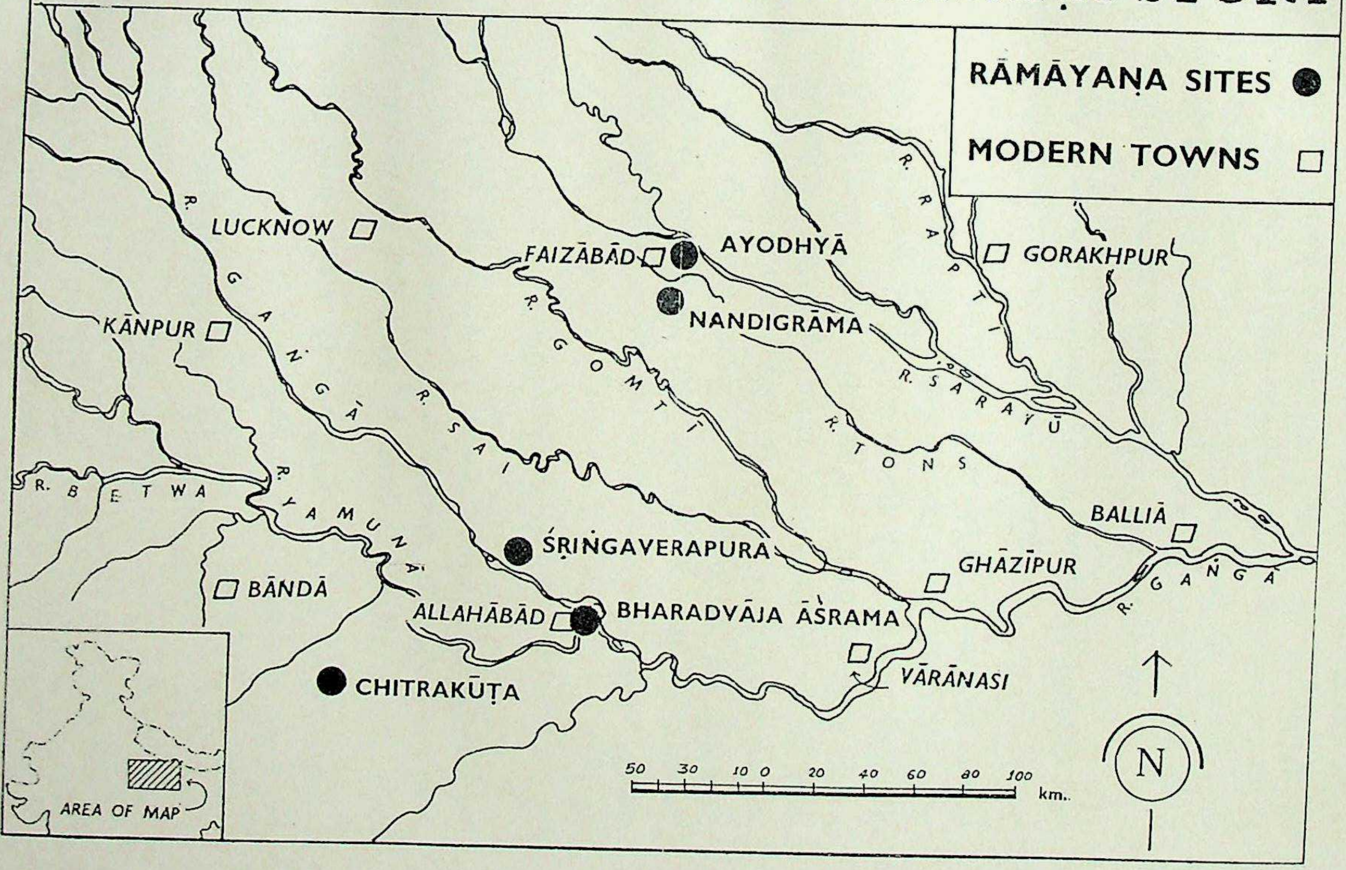
SITES ASSOCIATED WITH RĀMĀYAṆA STORY



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Śri Rāma's appeal was not confined to India alone. It broke the barriers of mountains and oceans alike, reaching Central Asia on the one hand and South-east Asia on the other. One has only to visit Prambanam in Java to see the entire life of Śri Rāma depicted on the temple-walls. Or one may go to Bali, the idyllic island in the neighbourhood to watch with rapt attention the gorgeous dance-drama based on Śrī Rāma's life, performed by the devoted bands of local artistes.

It is this Rāma, the human being, whose historicity has been the subject-matter of my field-research.

As is well known, there are two quite divergent views on the subject. According to one, everything mentioned in the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa* is correct to the very letter, so much so that Srī Rāma must have returned to Ayodhyā by an aeroplane (*Pushpaka-Vimāna*), after his conquest of Laṅkā. According to the other view, held by some Indian but mostly foreign scholars, the entire story is a figment of the imagination. The story, they hold, was concocted just to portray certain values and ideals and was clothed in the poetic garb of an epic.

2. THE EXCAVATIONS

Caught up in the midst of these completely untenable views, what should one do ? Sit downcast, throwing up the sponge, or take up the challenge ? I chose the latter.

For the past ten years I have been working on a Project called 'Archaeology of the Rāmāyṇa Sites'. Under it excavations have been carried out at (cf. Fig. 1) : Ayodhyā, the key site in the story; Śriṅgaverapura, where Srī Rāma crossed the Gaṅgā on his southward journey during the exile, Bharadvaja Āsrama, where he sojourned for a while, and Nandigrāma, from where Bharata ruled the kingdom durin Śrī Rāma's exile. Chitrakūṭa, where Sri Rāma stayed for a pretty long time before proceeding further to the south, however, yet remain to be duly excavated, though explorations have already been carried

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out. The Project does not include investigation of southerly sites like Panchavatī, etc. which may be taken up later through another project, or even by somebody else.

(i) *Ayodhyā*

Situated on the right bank of the Sarayū in Faizabad District, U.P., the ancient mound of Ayodhyā covers about a square kilometre of area. Over here excavations have been carried out at fourteen different spots. These are located variously, along the river on the western and northern peripheries, in the heart of the settlement, as well as on the eastern and southern sides, and include many of the traditional spots, such as the Rāma-Janma-Bhūmi area (Pl. II), Hanumān-Garhī, Sītā-kī-Rasoi, Nala-Tila, Kauśilyā-Ghāṭa, etc. (To this list may be added three spots where the Banaras Hindu University also did some woik more than a decade ago.) Such an extensive excavation programme was undertaken in order that we may not miss the earliest cultural deposits, if these existed only at some places and not at others. While no body can say as to what lies buried in the areas not excavated, the excavated trenches consistently revealed that there was nothing at the site which would go back prior to an early phase of the Northern Black Polished Ware (NBPW) Period. This phase, unlikely to go back earlier than the turn of the 8th-7th century B.C., represents the time when the Painted Grey Ware was coming to an end, and a new *deluxe* ware, viz. the Northern Black Polished Ware was emerging in all its glory—thin-sectioned, very well fired, highly shining and having a variety of shades, viz. coal-black, steel-grey, indigo, silvery, golden, etc. There are some shapes which began in the early phase but died out later. The same was the case with the associated red ware which showed changes from phase to phase, but this is not the place to go into these ceramic details.

Iton, which had already come into use in the Painted Grey Ware Period, continued with greater vigour in the Nor-

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COMPARATIVE STRATIGRAPHY OF RAMAYANA SITES

SITE / DATE	Ayodhya	Nandigrama	Sringaverapura	Bharadvaja Asrama	Chitrakuta	SITE / DATE
600	↑	↑	↑	× × × × ×		600
	GUPTA PERIOD	GUPTA PERIOD	GUPTA PERIOD	GUPTA PERIOD	?	
300				× × × × ×		300
	KUSHAN PERIOD	KUSHAN PERIOD	KUSHAN PERIOD	B		
A.D. ↑			T A N K	R	?	↑ A.D.
B.C. ↓	SUNGA PERIOD	SUNGA PERIOD	SUNGA PERIOD	E A		↓ B.C.
200				K		200
	N B P WARE — Late Phase	N B P WARE — Late Phase	N B P WARE — Late Phase		?	
	Middle Phase	Middle Phase	Middle Phase	× × × × ×		
	Early Phase	Early Phase	Early Phase	N B P WARE Early Phase	N B P WARE Early Phase	
700			PAINTED GREY WARE AND BLACK-SLIPPED WARE		?	700
1000	NATURAL SOIL	NATURAL SOIL	× × × × ×	NATURAL SOIL		1000
1100			OCHRE COLOUR WARE			1100
			NATURAL SOIL			

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thern Black Polished Ware Period. Thus, as things progressed during the NBPW Period, besides weapons of war for which this new metal was given the first preference, various kinds of agricultural tools were also produced. This, in due course, resulted in agricultural surplus and an allround rise in the economy. Thus, trade and commerce began to flourish as indicated by the coming into being of a system of weights—cylindrical pieces (in contrast to the cubical ones used by the Harappans) of various sizes, made of jasper, agate, chalcedony, etc. A little later in the same NBPW Period, coins, variously of silver and copper, either punched or cast, began to be used, showing very clearly another step forward towards urbanization. Within this very period there is also the evidence of town-Planning, with houses of kiln-burnt bricks, though this feature does not belong to the early phase.

Terracotta art as well as jewellery also showed an evolution and greater variety. The archaic-looking grey figurines of the Painted Grey Ware Period got partially modified and were given a shining slip, similar to that of the Northern Black Polished Ware. The beads and pendants included those of crystal, excellently faceted, and of other semi-precious stones, often produced to imitate birds and animals.

After the end of the Northern Black Polished Ware Period around *circa* 200 B.C., the occupation at Ayodhyā continued through the Śuṅga, Kushāṇa and Gupta Periods to the medieval times. In fact, the site is under occupation even today, but with these periods we are not concerned at the moment.

(*ii*) *Nandigrāma*

Right near the tank known as Bharata Kuṇḍa, about 15 km. south of Ayodhyā, there is no ancient mound. However, a bit away, on the south of the Tamasā, there does exist a mound. It has no specific name and is just called 'Rahet', a word which is locally said to mean 'a habitation'. However, it is this

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mound that is generally thought to represent the ancient site of Nandigrāma. An excavation revealed that the occupation over here too began with the Northern Black Polished Ware and not earlier.

(*iii*) *Śṛiṅgaverapura*

At Śṛiṅgaverapura, two periods of occupation, preceding the NBPW Period have been encountered. From bottom upwards, these are distinguished respectively by the Ochre Colour Ware, and the Black-slipped Ware. While the former occupation commenced in the eleventh century B.C., the latter began, after a break, only around the middle of the tenth century B.C., as revealed by the thermoluminescence and Carbon-14 dates. However, between Black-slipped Ware and the NBP Ware Periods there is no break of occupation, since the former continued for some time along with the latter. The NBP Ware appears to have commenced around 700 B.C. and after its full play, came to an end some time around 200 B.C. Thereafter there is evidence successively of the Śuṅga, Kushaṇa Gupta, Rajput and medieval periods. Though not quite relevant in the context of the present discussion, a passing reference may nonetheless be made to the discovery of a 250-metre long tank of kilnfired bricks constructed around the beginning of the Christian era. With its feeding channel, silting chambers, 'horizontal and vertical warpings', and a waste-weir, the tank is indeed a unique example of hydraulic engineering in ancient days, of which India can rightly be proud.

(*iv*) *Citrakūṭa*

Though a systematic excavation yet remains to be carried out at Citrakūṭa, it may be mentioned that surface-exploration has revealed the presence of the NBP Ware and some Black slipped Ware in exposure in between the late medieval temples standing on the left bank of the Mandākinī at Rāmaghāṭa.

(*v*) *Bharadvāja Āśrama*

At Bharadvāja Āśrama (Pl.III) there was no Ochre Colour Ware occupation. However, in a matrix of sandy allu-

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vium the Black-slipped Ware was found inter-mixed with the Northern Black Polished Ware, indicating that the site witnessed its first human activity at a time when the Black-slipped Ware and the Northern Black Polished ware overlapped. The only other occupation met with at Bharadvāja Āśrama was that of the Gupta Period, assignable to *circa* fourth-sixth centuries A.D., as evidenced by the typical pottery and terracotta seals and sealings.

3. *An Analysis of the Data*

An analysis of the evidence from Ayodhyā, Nandigrāma, Śṛiṅgaverapura and Bharadvāja Āśrama clearly shows that *the earliest time when all these sites could have co-existed was that of the early Northern Black Polished Ware* (cf. Fig. 2). The two earlier periods, viz. those of the Ochre Colour and Black-slipped Wares encountered at Śṛiṅgaverapura only indicate that this particular site had been in existence for a few centuries before the emergence of the Northern Black Polished Ware. But this does not alter the comparative position just enunciated. It would thus appear that if the Rāmāyaṇa episode has any basis in historical reality it can be placed at the earliest only during the early phase of the Northern Black Polished Ware Period, which may have been around the beginning of the 7th century B.C. as discussed earlier.

However, it is obvious that the contemporaneity of these *Rāmāyaṇa* sites during the early NBPW period does not necessarily establish the historicity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* epic itself. Thus, some one may very well ask : why can the *Rāmāyaṇa* still not be a figment of the imagination of a poet called Vālmīki ? In this debate, however, a counter-question may also be posed, which is as follows. Since, as it is generally believed, the *Rāmāyaṇa* was composed between the second century B.C. and second century A.D. and since Bharadvāja Āśrama was non-existent at that time, how could Vālmīki include in his story a reference to it ? The other three sites, viz. Ayodhyā, Śṛiṅgaverapura and Nandigrāma were 'living' during

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that period and any poet creating a story could have easily utilized their locales, but *that was certainly not the case with Bharadvāja Āśrama. The only way in which the inclusion of Bharadvāja Āśrama in the Rāmāyaṇa story can be explained is that there must have existed a traditional basic story referring to all these sites, coming down orally since the seventh century B.C. which was reduced to writing between the second century B.C. and second century A.D.* Thus, the story cannot be a mere figment of imagination. In this context it may not be out of place to mention that the carrying down of episodes through oral tradition is in vogue even today in the country-side, even though we have the printing press. I have tape-recorded one such ballad relating to a gruesome event, resulting in the death of hundreds of pilgrims, that took place in 1954 on the occasion of the Kumbha Mela at Allahabad. In fact, there are various versions of this ballad and even interpolations have started taking place.

The nature of the remains found at Bharadvaja Āśrama is of further significance while discussing the probable historicity of the Rāmāyaṇa story. As already stated, sherds of the Black-slipped and Northern Black Polished Wares were found higgledy-piggledy in a matrix of sandy loam. In a part of the site some post-holes were noted. There also occurred odd bits of clay-plaster bearing reed-impressions, but there were no regular floors or house-remains. This kind of evidence suggests that the site may really have been that of an *āśrama* (hermitage) with a few odd huts here and there, in contrast to the regular settlements encountered at Ayodhyā, Nandigrāma and Śṛiṅgaverapura. The steep drop in the ground-level immediately below Bharadvāja Āśrama also clearly suggests that at one time the river was flowing past it, though now it is a couple of kilometres away. In fact, if the two mud-bunds that separate this area from the Gaṅgā are removed, the waters of the river would start re-washing the ancient bank at Bhardvāja Āśrama.

In the context of Bharadvāja Āśrama it may also be recalled that after its desertion in *circa* sixth century B.C., the

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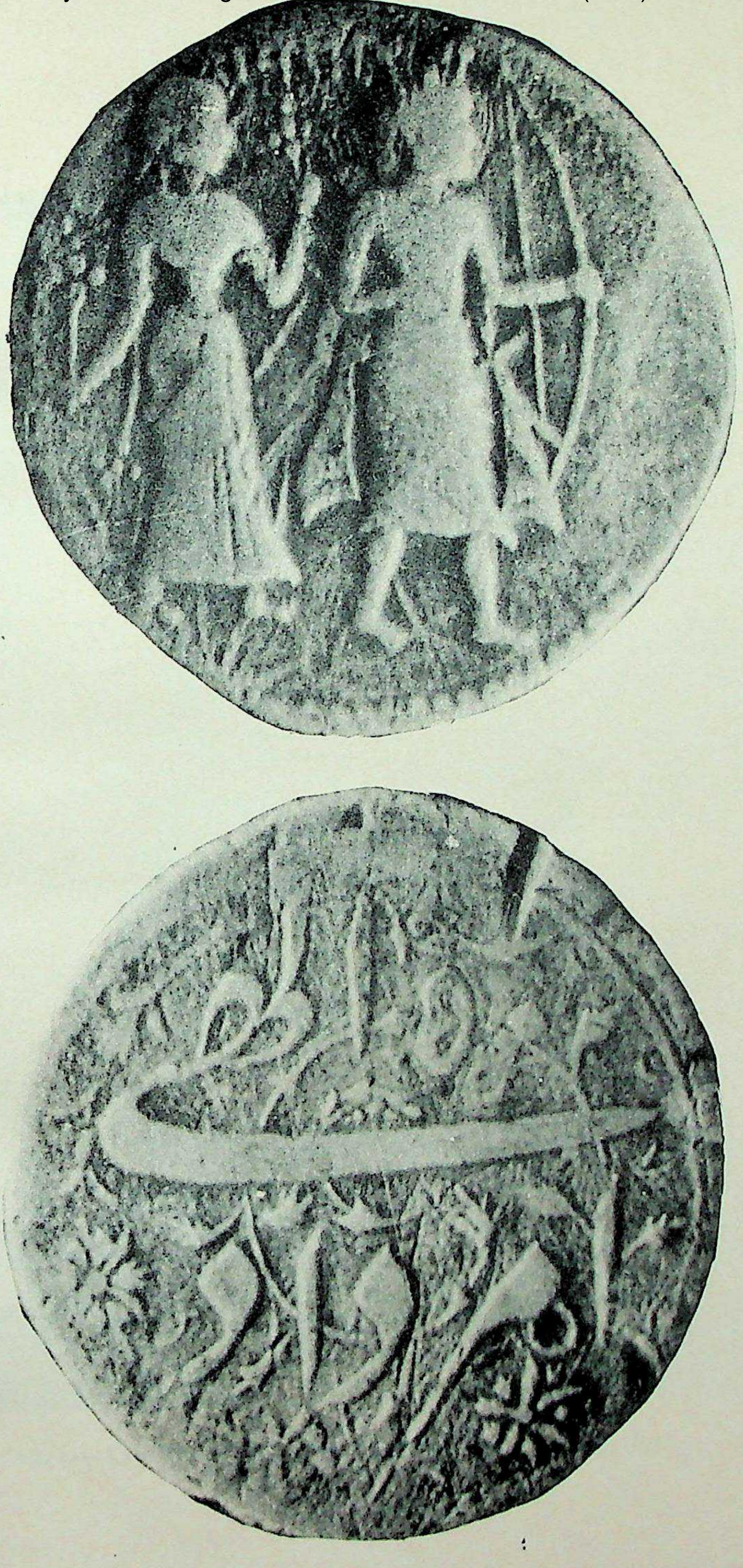

Plate I—Rāma and Sitā in Silver Coin of Akbar.

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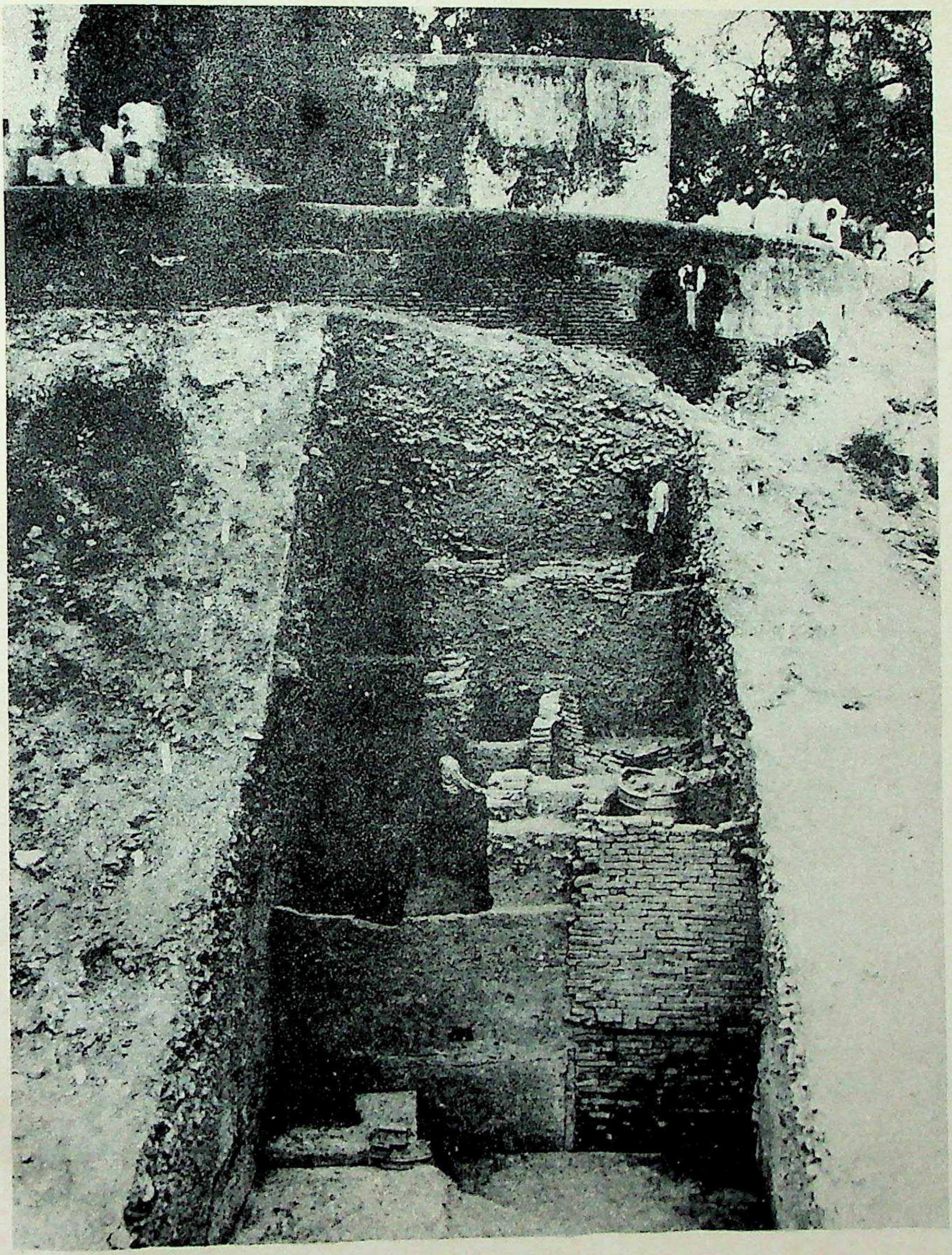

Plate II—Excavation at Rāma-Janma-Bhumi Area, Ayodhya.

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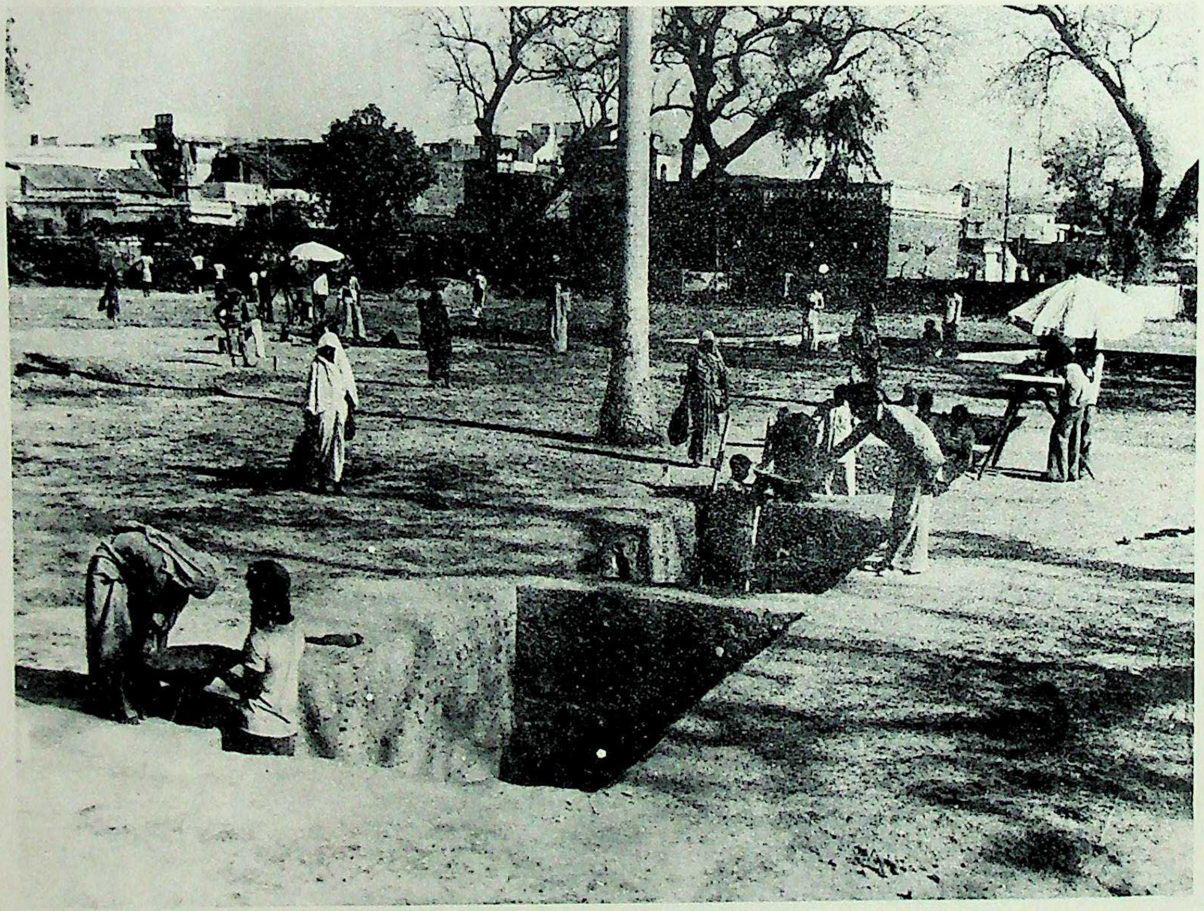

Plate III—Excavation at Bharadvaja Ashram.

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site was re-occupied only during the fourth-fifth centuries A.D. This renewal of occupation at this point of time may also not be without significance. The *Rāmāyaṇa* of Valmīki had been completed by the second century A.D. and evidently the Rāma cult was on the ascendency. It was in such a religious climate that Bharadvāja Āśrama witnessed a spurt of building activity, much in the same way as did Ayodhyā during this period as also again in the seventeenth-eighteenth centuries A.D. after the composition of the *Rāmacarita-mānasa* of Tulsi Das.

True, we do not have any contemporary inscriptional evidence to establish the historicity of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. At the same time, one wonders if this wish would ever be fulfilled, for so far we have not come across any inscription prior to the 3rd-4th centuries B.C. (barring, of course, those of the Indus Civilization). Thus, we have only the circumstantial evidence to fall back upon, whatever be its relative strength. In sum, the position seems to be that the *Rāmāyaṇa* may not have been a figment of the imagination, but may have had a kernel of truth at its base. At the same time, the descriptions of mighty palaces, etc. do not depict the material culture of the time of the original event but may have found their way into the ever-enlarging text and may represent the material culture prevalent at the time of the composition of the verses concerned.

That the Rāmāyaṇa episode could be so late as the seventh century B.C. has shocked many including, let it be frankly confessed, myself. But howsoever disappointed I may have felt, the key-site of Ayodhyā has refused to yield anything earlier than *circa* 700 B.C. and, as a disciplined archaeologist, I have no option but to submit to the judgement of the Mother Earth.

Some people, however, are looking for escape routes. In this context, three different views have been adduced. According to one, the Rāmāyaṇa story originally belonged to an area far in the north-west and it was only later on that the story was transplanted on easterly sites of Ayodhyā, Śṛiṅgaverapura,

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Bharadvāja Āśrama, etc. But the proponents of this view do not come forward with any concrete names of places where the story, according to them, had originally been enacted, nor do they cite any texts in support of their view.

According to another view, the place now known as Ayodhyā is not the Ayodhyā of the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa.* The holders of this view even go to the extent of suggesting that Ayodhyā was situated on the bank of the Gaṅgā. They cite the *Samyutta-Nikāya* where it is mentioned as follows :

"Ekam samayam Bhagavā Ayojjhāyam viharati gaṅgayā nadiyā tīre".

But a closer and critical look at this very text shows that if we take the word '*gaṅgā*' mentioned herein seriously to mean the proper river Gaṅgā itself, then even a place like Kausāmbī, about the identification of which there are no two opinions and which is doubtless situated on the bank of the Yamunā will have to be shifted on to the bank of the Gaṅgā. The relevant portion of the text runs as follows :

"Ekam Samayam Bhagavā Kosambiyām viharati gaṅgayā nadiyā tīre".

i.e. "Once upon a time the Lord (Buddha) was moving around in Kausāmbī on the bank of the gaṅgā".

The truth of the matter is that the word '*gaṅgā*' in both the cases, namely those of Ayodhyā as well as Kauśāmbī, only means a river in the generic sense. In fact, I have heard many bathers in the Sarayū call it '*gaṅgā*' even today.

Supporters of a third view argue that the Ayodhyā of Śrī Rāma has been washed away by the Sarayū and what remains is only a later-day Ayodhyā. Now, while destruction by river-erosion has been noted at quite a few sites, even these sites have retained a part of the affected occupational strata in spite of the erosional activities. For example, there is archaeologi-

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cal evidence to demonstrate that the site of Hastināpura was destroyed by a flood in the Gaṅgā, on whose right bank it stands, yet a good bit of the preflood, Painted Grey Ware, settlement is still available there. Likewise, the site of Śṛiṅgaverapura has been and is still being eroded by the Gaṅgā, yet it has retained the earliest occupational deposit, viz. those of the Ochre Colour Ware Culture.

As already mentioned earlier, excavations were carried out at seventeen different spots at Ayodhyā. This was done in order to ensure, as far as it is humanly possible, that the earliest levels were not missed. The spots, to recapitulate, are located variously on the bank of the Sarayū, and along the peripheries and in the heart of the ancient mound. But nothing pre-seventh century B.C. has been found. It would, therefore, be difficult to run away from the hard realities, howsoever uncomforting these may be. If the Buddha or Mahāvira could be born in the sixth century B.C. or Jesus Christ as late as only 2000 years ago, why should there be a sentimental set-back if the archaeological evidence suggests that the Rāmāyaṇa episode may not have been older than the seventh Century B.C.

In this context, it is interesting to note that as many as sixty-five years ago, the noted historian H. C. Raychaudhury in his book, ***Political History of Ancient India***, had also stated that the period of Janaka, the father-in-law of Śrī Rāma, may have been in the seventh century B.C. In arriving at this date, he had utilized quite independent evidence, viz. that from the ***Brāhmaṇas*** and ***Upanishads***. But not even a little finger was raised then. Why should there be a furore now when archaeology comes out with a similar result ? Let us calmly weigh and consider the same, instead of attempting to reject it outright.

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INDIAN TRADITION AND ARCHAEOLOGY

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The Indian traditions are stored in the Purāṇas and the Epics; some corroborations and additional informations are available from the vast Vedic literature. And scholars like Pargiter, Raychaudhuri and Bhargava have devoted considerable time and labour to reconstruct a working sequential history of the Pre-Mahābhārata or even Pre-Buddha times. But the crux of the problem has been the chronology and it is not relevant here to speak about the various schemes of chronology for ancient pre-Bhārata and pre-Buddha dynasties worked out by Indian and foreign scholars. The problem appeared insoluble because as no contemporary or even near contemporary absolute date was available. Often in sheer despair, and confused by the inconsistencies, and mythical accounts in the ancient traditional literature, it was held by some like D.C. Sircar that the entire accounts are imaginary and certainly provide no base for sober history.

But some other scholars continued to hold that the traditions contain some real truths, and that they refer to genuine historical traditions and events about men and material culture gleaned through a maze of labyrinthic myths and chronological absurdities contained in them. Puratattva No. 8 is very largely devoted to the discussion of the theme "Archaeology and Tradition" by eminent archaeologists and historians, who have tried to identify the various chalcolithic and PGW cultures with one or the other early and later pauranic dynasties. I do not here propose to cover the same ground again except by pointing out that in view of uncertainty about the chronology and sequence both in the vedic and puranic literature, and the incomplete reconstruction of the material cultures on the basis of archaeology from the end of the

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Harappan to the beginning of the historical period, any attempt to identify any particular archaeologically exposed culture with one or the other of the vedic and puranic dynasties or peoples would still remain more or less speculative. Sankalia's (1975-76: 83) observation 'we surely miss the identity of the authors of (these) regional and subregional culture' is sad but apt. Here we are concerned with the impact of archaeology on the truth or otherwise on the most popular and living traditions about Rāma's story and about Kṛshṇa and the Mahābhārata. The problem whether they are merely myths or are even partly *Real* is exercising our mind. Mahābhārata, Myth and Reality' (Gupta 1976), Rāmāyaṇa 'Myth or Reality' (Sankalia 1973) are two serious exercises in the line.

Here I am only to examine the impact of archaeological activities on the voracity of the traditions. Schilemann's (1878) was probably the first attempt to seek corroboration of the Iliad's story by archaeology, and he proceeded with complete faith in Homers' account, and following it doggedly and devotedly in spite of physical, financial obstacles and scholastic jeers, he struck at the real site Troy. Then we all are aware that excavations in Lebanon, Palestine and Syria with a view to corroborate the Bible cities or sites have led to appreciable good results (Albright, 1966).

It was therefore, rather late in this country that scholars turned to archaeology for the verification of the Epic stories. This was partly because the earlier archaeologists from Cunningham onwards were very much concerned with Buddhist sites about which there were Chinese accounts and datable Buddhist and Jain literary texts. As a matter of fact it was in the wake of the excavation of the Buddhist stūpa that the Indus Valley Civilization was struck at in the twenties of the 20th century, and since then archaeologists remained busy in enlarging their knowledge about the Indus Valley Civilization—Chanhudaro, Further excavations at Harappa, and Mohanjodaro and work in Kalibangan took practically all the time of archaeologists except for Arikamedu, Brahmagiri and Maski.

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It was left to B.B. Lal on the morrow of Indian independence to embark on the adventur of testing Indian traditions on the crucible of archaeology. He started with the Mahābhārata sites—sites with placenames and geographical location as described or nearly described in the Mahābhārata. And the first site selected was Hastināpur, the capital of the Kurus, which was excavated. (Lal 1954-55: 4-151). Lal found in Period II Painted Grey Ware. This is found at the lowest levels in all the traditional Mahābhārata sites as stated by B.B. Lal (1976: 52). In the top layers of Period II iron was found. Lal believes that the PGW is the Mahābhārata pottery and the Mahābhārata was an event when iron was already in use. He dated the PGW ware 1100—800 B.C., and fixed the date of the Mahābhārata war in cir 836 B.C. (Lal 1976: 58). This date he arrives on the basis of average of the successive generations that passed between Udayana and Parikshit. His date for the war is not much far from Pargiter who on the same basis-average of reigns—had suggested 950 B.C. for the event, Lal's average being 14, and Pargiters 18.[1] Lal found corroboration of his archaeological finding at Hastināpur which showed that the city was flooded and abandoned and after a gap of flood deposits intervening, NBP settlment arose at Hastināpur. The Purānas refer to floods at Hastināpur, which led Nicakshu to abandon Hastināpur and shift to Kauśāmbi as his new capital, and at Kauśāmbi late PGW sherds were found. Nicakshu is 6th in line from Parikshit, including the former. If Lal's average is taken, Nicasku should be separated from Parikshit by 70 years. Now if we include a few years of the reign of Yudhisthira after the Mahābhārata war dated in 836 B.C. Nicakshu should be deemed to have come to the throne 836-70 (—reign of Yudhisthira)=766 B.C.× (or still a few years later). Now as the common denominator of the pottery culture in all the Mahābhārata sites is PGW, the conclusion seems irresistible that the PGW is the pottery of the Mahā-

1. It is interesting to note that long ago Fergussion also concluded that the average of reigns of west Asiatic Kings was 14.

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bhārata times, unless the time bracket proposed by Lal for the PGW is found to be too late for the Mahābhārata. Agarwal (1974: 130-132) and Dikshit (1973: 152) believe that PGW can't be dated earlier than 800 B.C. and the Atranjikhera date 1025-110 B.C. for the PGW is erratic and should not be taken into account. Sankalia (1975-76: 83) appears to agree with the view that the PGW has to be dated between 800-400 B.C. Lal (1975-76: 130) has countered the argument, and the calibration taken into account, brings the PGW date even nearer to the proposed date for the War. More dates for PGW are certainly desirable to settle the issue beyond dispute. To me it appears that Lal is right in proposing the time bracket, specially when we have a pre-iron PGW complex at Bhagawanpura and the PGW lower levels at Hastinapura are also free from iron.

When traditional sites of the Mahabharata were being tested by archaeology, Ramayanic tradition could not be left out. B.H.U. team struck at Ayodhyā, the capital city of Rāma and found nothing earlier than NBP. As the probings were on small scale, Lal with greater expertise and resources took up Ayodhyā again. As many as 14 different sites in the Ayodhyā city were taken, and everywhere the earliest habitation did not go beyond the NBP, or Early NBP Phase as Lal would now christen it (Lal 1981: 30-33). This was rather intriguing if not astounding as Rāma is consistently put much earlier than the Māhābharata heroes, according to persistent Indian literary and religions traditious. Sankalia who refers to PGW sherds found on surface in Ayodhyā, (1975-76: 80,) had hoped, 'Any way Ayodhyā when excavated should give us thick deposits and earliest should go back to atleast 2500 B.C.' But as Lal observed (1975-76: 131) "let the spade speak, not me !". And the spade has spoken. The common denominator at all Rāmāyaṇa sites excavated is NBP (in its early phase), and so younger than PGW, the sites of the Mahabharata traditions. Lal and Dikshit also investigated Nandigrāma, Bharadvāja Āśrama and Śriṅgaverapura sites closely associated with Rama's story and everywhere they noticed the lowest

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common denominater to be the early NBP. At Śringaverapura two earlier cultures, like OCP, and Black-slipped ware, were encountered, but as these are not found in any other Ramayanic sites, none of these can be considered as Ramayanic pottery. So the evidence of archaeological investigations to date is that the Ramayanic sites are younger than the Mahabharata site. At Śriṅgaverapura the earliest occupation of a nomadic tribe using red ware (may be related to OCP) has been noticed. It has been dated c. 1050-1000 B.C. This is followed by Period II (*circa* 950-700 B.C.), with Black-sliped ware and plain grey-ware as the diagnostic ceramic, some PGW, sherds were also found. Then is the early NBP (Period III) with some PGW sherds continuing. This is put to 700 B.C., as IIB is said to end in *circa* 700 B.C. (Lal and Dikshit 1978-79: 6). And early NBP is common to all the Ramayanic sites and so according to Lal and Dikshit it may represent the time of Rāma's story.

Apparently the conclusion is that Rāma is later by more than a century to Kṛishṇa, the wire—puller of the Great War. This is a big jolt to cherished beliefs, and is contrary to almost all literary traditions. I have used the phrase 'almost', because Lal has shown that there is a literary tradition in support of his theory that the Rāmāyaṇa-story is later than that of the Māhābhārata War. He quotes the Bṛhdāraṇyaka Upanishad (III. 3, 1) where Yājnavalkya in the court of Janaka is asked, where have the Pārikshitas gone' ? This shows that in the time of Yājnavalkya and Janaka of Mithilā, the dynastly of Parikshit son of Abhimanyu and grandson of Arjuna, the hero of the Mahābhārata had alread passed away sometime before and was a living problem of enquiry. This Janaka has been referred to as Siradhvaja Janaka, the father-in-law of Rāma, by Bhavabhūti (Mahāvira carita (I, V. 14). So Rāma, younger contemporary of Janaka, lived much later than Parikshit (II) of the Puranic list. How much later ? Janamejaya's priest was Tura Kāvasheya, and Uddālaka Āruṇi and his pupil Yājnavalkya were 5th or 6th step below Tura Kāvasheya. So

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the gap between Janamejaya and Janaka of Videha whose contemporaries were Uddlaka Āruṇi and Yajñavalkya should be five generations, and 30 years is the average length between two generations of Patriarchs. So this is (Raychaudhuri, 1972: 46-47), 150 years. Now if Janamejaya, son of Parikshit, is placed in *circa* 822 B.C. (836-14) and then Janaka being separated by 5, generations of Patriarchs (*gurus*), should be placed in 822—150=672 B.C. The archaeological dating of early NBP would also coincide with that. The archaeological period and the period of Janaka on the basis of Bṛhadāraṇayaka Upanishad thus synchronise.

In support of Lal's hypothesis I may suggest another synchronism. According to vedic sources, Uddālaka Āruṇi was the younger contemporary of Aśvapati king of Kekaya, who also instructed Aruṇa Alepavasi belonging to an older generation from Uddālaka Āruṇi. So he was an elder contemporary of Uddālaka Āruṇi. (Raychaudhuri 1972: 58). Now Aśvapati king of Kekaya was maternal uncle of Bharata. Raychaudhuri and Y. Mishra believing that Rāma was much earlier than the Mahābhārata, could not think that this Aśvapati could be contemporary of Janaka and Daśaratha, and so they thought of a later Aśvapati. While there could be more than one Aśvapati as king of Kekayas, no other king of Kekaya is referred to as Aśvapati. If what archaeology is trying to show, then this contemporaniety of Janaka with Aśvapati may suggest Bharata's grand-uncle or maternal uncle could have flourished towards the end of the 8th century B.C. Another Pauranic statement may be referred to as indirectly suggesting an ancient tradition about the precedence in time of Kṛshṇa over Rāma. Mucukunda was son of Māndhatṛ a great king. Harivaṁsa says that he slept in a cave for a long time where Kālayavana was persuing Krishṇa, and the awakened Mucukunda killed Kalayavana. (Pargiter, 1972: 43). Stripped of the mythical, long sleep, the story suggests a tradition that Mucukunda, an early ancestor of Rāma was a contemporary of Kṛshṇa.

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It may be of some value to note that some Mahābhārata heroes like Dhṛatarāshtra Vicitravirya are referred to in the Vedic literature. Even Devakiputra Kṛshṇa is referred to in the Chāndogya Upanishad as a pupil of Ghora Angirasa (Vedic Index Vol I. p 184). Winternitz 1927: 447) finds difficult to separate this old sage of the time of Upanishads with the Bhagavat-gitā. But Rāma or Daśaratha is not mentioned at all even in the later Vedic literature; he does not appear even in old Upanishads (Winternitz 1927: 515) and even Ayodhyā is not mentioned in the later Vedic literature, as M.C. Joshi (1975-76: 98) would think (Lal 1978-79: 45-49). Could not this negative evidence strengthen the view that Rāma was later than the end of the Vedic literature. Rāma is not even alluded to by Paṇini who mentions Vasudeva, Arjuna and Yudhisthira. Panini may be placed in the early 5th-4th Century B.C. and by then Rāma's story had not become well known, it appears.

Now the question is whether the archaeological data up-to-date and stray references or absence of references in the literary traditions mentioned above prove to the hilt that Kṛshṇa and the Mahābhārata War preceded Rāma.

To me there is no escape from such a conclusion. The archaeological evidence as exposed-to date and brilliantly analysed by Lal (1981 : 31) leaves little scope for doubt. Lal himself admits 'No body can say what lies buried in the areas not excavated'. It is possible to speculate that in some other trenches if taken in Ayodhyā and Śriṅgaverapura, the two sites comparatively well excavated, some earlier cultures than of early NBP may be struck at, and it has been the experience of archaeologist that the lowest cultural level at a site is not encountered in every trench. It may also be speculated that Ayodhyā of Rāma could have been washed away entirely in the wake of the Saryū floods (tradition is that Rama took with him all the citizens of Ayodhyā through the deep waters of the Saryū to the Sāketa and no trace was left). As the Saryū has been changing courses, the Ayodhyā of Rama could be buried in the mid Saryū. But all this speculation is weakened when

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we find that as many as 14 sites in Ayodhyā city and Nandigrama were taken. No flood peposits or earlier culture were contacted. So while possibility may be there, ***probability*** is very little that any earlier culture would be found in Ayodhyā. But this evidence raises a tearing controversy as it runs counter to the almost unanimous traditional and religious literature. Lal (1981: 33) himself hinted at one such tradition. Traditionally Rāma is of 12 kalās, and Kṛshṇa of 16 kalās, and followings the law of evolution Krshṇa, the complete God (Kṛshṇastu Bhagavāna Swayaṁ) should follow Rāma, who is only 3/4 God. This problem may be skirted by pointing out that Rāma belonged to solar (Sun-Aditya's) race and Kṛshna to lunar (Moon = Candra) race and there are 12 Ādityas while the Moon has sixteen phases. So both Rāma of solar descent and Kṛshṇa of lunar descent were complete in themselves. On this ground to argue precedence of one over the other should be irrelevant.

But more serious objections may be raised. One is of methodology. The archaeological evidence (to date) brought up by Lal goes against the consistent literary traditions and the Puranic genealogies according to which Kṛshṇa is 28th generation later than Rāma (Pargiter 1972: 147-48). Now Lal literally turns the table upside down and appears to reject the Puranic geneological accounts completely in the reconstruction of Rāma's chronology.

But Lal himself in his reconstruction of the Mahābhātata chronology, in the light of his archaeological findings, leading to identification of PGW culture with the Mahābhārata times, relies on the Pauranic-geneological accounts from Udayana to Parikshit for even the flood of Hastinapura; he inflect, rejects completely the pre-Parikshit royal dynasties in the Purānas, because it seems counter to his proposed thesis. His identification of Siradhvaja of Janaka with Janaka contemporary of Yājñavalkya is also not unchallenged. There have been many Janakas and more than one Yājñavalkya (Pargiter 1972: 145, 331). Yogendra Mishra, the latest authority on history of Videha, gives no credence to the

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testimony of Bhavabhūti, and observes "late reference of a dramatist (not a historian or an epigraphist) cannot undo that in any way" (Misra 1981: 79-80) Raychoudhuri (1972: 44-45) is sure that Janaka, the great philosopher king was later than the Parikshitas, 'admits of no doubt,' and he finds it very difficult to identify any one of the many kings bearing Janaka-names in the Epic and Puranic literature with the 'great Janaka of the Vedic texts'. After quoting the relevant verses in the Mahavīracarita (Act I verse 14) and the Uttara-Rāmacarita (Act II, verse 9) of Bhavabhūti, making Siradhvaja Janaka and Yājñavalkya contemporary. Raychaudhuri observes, 'the identification of Siradhvaja with Vedic Janaka appears to have been accepted by Bhavabhuti'. But Raychaudhuri does not appear to accept Bhavabhuti unhesitatingly, as Lal does, and says 'it is impossible to say how far the identification of the Vedic Janaka with the father of Sītā is correct' Raychaudhuri (1972 : 44-52) Winternitz (1927: 515) observes, 'Whether that king Janaka of Videha who is frequently mentioned in the Upanishads is the same as father of Sītā must remain an open question.' It may be pointed out regarding the proposed identification by B.B. Lal that Janaka, even in the Bālakāṇda (wherein he is only mentioned) and which is a late addition and not composed by Vālmīki, is refered to as Satyavikramaṁ, nishthitam Savasastreshe tatha Vedeshu nishthitam (1.12.18) and dharmavatsalam, dhārmikam (1.69.7.) no where even distantly he is referred to as philosopher-king or patron of philosophers as the Vedic Janaka definitely was. It may however, be conceded that the word Videha and Vaidehi appears in the Rāmāyaṇa. So down to the 2nd century A.D., if not later, Janaka the father of Sītā, was not considered identical with Janaka the Vedic King. I would very much like to know the several other sources where in Janaka the father-in-law of Rāma is described as a philosopher king as Lal (1975-76: 131,) would lead us to believe. The internal evidences from the Rāmāyaṇa and the Mahābhārata also multiply difficulties in the way of proposed identification. Rama's story is included in the Maha-

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bharata as an Upakhyāna, an old legend, while no Mahābhārata hero is referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa. It is quite clear that even down to the 4th century A.D., when the Mahābhārata is believed to have acquired the present critical test the tradition of Rāma story happening long before the Mahābhārata was persisting. Winternitz puts the time bracket 4th century B.C. to the 4th century A.D. for the transformation of the Epic Mahābhārata into the present compilation (on the whole, even later interpolations were made), he further says that 'It is probable that the original Rāmāyana was composed in 3rd century B.C. by Vālmīki on the basis of ancient ballads, and received its present extent and contents as early as towards the close of the 2nd century A.D. (Winternitz 1927: 474, 516-517). As the Rāmopākhyāna in the Mahābhārata clearly takes Rāma as an incarnation of Vishṇū, (not at all discernible in the original Rāmāyaṇa-II-VI by Vālmīki), it can certainly be said that the ākhyāna in the present form could not be included in the Mahābhārata before the end of 2nd century A.D. rather in 3rd or 4rh century A.D. So it is clear till then it was believed that Rāma was earlier than Kṛshna. "It is therefore, permissible to conclude that the original Rāmāyaṇa in which Rāma was a human being was composed by Vālmīki in the 3rd or more probably in the 4th century B.C. and that with the addition of Book I and VII and with some passages in the other books it assumed its present form at the end of the 2nd century A.D. when Rāma was definitely dified as an incarnation of Vishnū (Majumdar 1968: 254). Incidental references in the Rāmāyana and the Mahābhārata about south India and the Deccan my also be used to support the long lived tradition. While in the Rāmāyana, Deccan and south India is in mere tribal state, a Janasthāna with the non-food producing Vānaras and the Rākshasas, in the Mahābhārata there are organised kingdoms in south India with a fair degree of civilization. Chanan in his work "Spread of Agriculture in Ancient India" shows that Rāmāyanic society had two distinct cultures—agrarian in Kosala and tribal in the land of the Vānaras and Rākshasas. While it

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is ture that both the Epics were composed long after the events, if we believe them to be rooted in history (Lal has no doubt that they refer to historical events) we have to admit that incidental references in them about regions and socio-economic conditions should betray some resemblance of the times they are supposed to describe, and a comparative study of these would show that the time of the Rāma's story is earlier than that of the Mahābhārata. Attention may be drawn to the fact that in the Mahābhārata references to cavalry encounters (horsemen fighting horsemen) are many, though no Mahābhārata hero fights on horseback. This shows that cavalry as a limb of war was known though was not so significant as leter. Cavalry is not known in the Rāmāyana at all. Dasarath and Rāvana fight from horse-drawn chariots but no horsemen as soldier is known. Does it not show that the Rāmāyaṇa times were earlier than the Mahābhārata. Again, we should not ignore the testimony of the Gītā incorporated in the Mahābhārata. The Gita is certainly not a work of the time of the Great War, but it is certainly not as late as the 5th century A.D. when the Mahābhārata is said to have reached its final stage of compilation, the fact that the Gita does not even remotely allude to the foreigners, even to the Mahāyana Buddhism indirectly, and that its zeal to place bhaktiyoga on the same if not higher pedastal than gyāna and karmayoga show that Bhagavatism had not till then attained its supreme position as it did certainly by 3rd-4th centuries A.D., though was quite entrenched as early as 2nd century B.C. as to attract the Greek Heliodorus to it. I would place Gītā not later than 2nd century A.D. Winternitz (1927: 437-438) thinks it not to be too bold to assume that the old Bhagvadgītā was written at about this time (the time of Heliodorus-pillar-inscription beginning of 2nd century B.C.). The form in which it appears in the Mahābhārata today was fixed in the early A.D. (Majumdar : 1968:249) And in the Gītā, Kṛshṇa is placed later than Rāma. We should note that while the theory of avatāravāda is clearly enunciated in the Gītā, (IV, vs. 6-8) no where any actual incarnation is referred to, no allusion even to Fish, Tortoise, Boar, Narasimha,

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not even of Rāma as his incarnation. Where Kṛshṇa is saying that he is Rāma as the warrior (Rāmah śastrabhṛtamanam) he is not referring to his previous incarnation as Rāma. In the relevant verses in the Gītā, Kṛshṇa claims to be Himālaya Sāgara, Asvatha tree, etc. (Gītā X. vs. 21-31). What he is saying is that best of every kind is He, the ultimate God. So in our view except for the theoretical exposition of the principle of incarnation no actual list of incarnations was drawn up when the Gīta was composed. This would further show the antiquity of Gita vis-a-vis the development of the theory of incarnation. It is in the Narāyanīya section (definitely a much later addition) that the theory of incarnation is held and ten avataras including that of Rāma-Dāśarthi is mentioned (Chattopadhyaya 1962: 88-89). In the same section the number of avatāras is six or four, showing the theory still in a fluid state. In the background of the archaeological evidence-to-date, the question to answer is when was the actual order of events (Kṛshṇa preceding Rāma), was turned upside down by the Brahmanical authors who must have then very effectively and on a large scale, overhauled the entire earlier kshatriya traditions to make Rāma earlier than Kṛshṇa.

And the other more important query is, if so, why ? What was the compelling motive for them making Rāma earlier than Kṛshṇa and overturning the historical sequence in the light of the present archaeological evidence ? We may have to look into the comparative antiquity of Kṛshṇa and Rāma cults. In view of the uncertainty about the date of the principal religous and Epic works, let us take inscriptional and sculptural evidence. While Kṛshṇa is referred to in the inscriptions from 2nd century B.C. onwards, (Chattopadhyaya 1962: 25), epigraphic notices of Rāma are much later. Even Megasthenes (Maccrindle, 1960: 206) in the 3rd century B.C. refers to Heracles cult Vāsudeva cult) among the Soursenis (in Mathura region, the playground of Kṛshṇa). He does not mention Ayodhyā at all, nor Rāma. Sculptures describing scenes from Kṛshṇa's life found in Mathura may be dated from 1st-2nd century A.D. at

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the latest. V.S. Agarawal refers to a statue of Balarāma (Samkarshaṇa of Vāsudeva Kṛshṇa cult) as belonging to 2nd century B.C. (quoted by Chattopadhyaya 1962: 35). But Rāma's statue is not available before 5th century A.D., sculptured Ramayanic scenes from Devagarh in Madhya Pradesh and Aphsad in Bihar are dated in 6th and 7th centuries respectively. We may say that Rāma as God, an incarnation of Vishṇu is quite a late phenomenon. Rāma son of Daśaratha in the Rāmāyaṇa is described as a human hero but in a later passage, near the end of the original work, occurs a chapter describing how Sītā entered the fire when the Gods appeared and Brahmā declared Rāma to be Nārāyaṇa (Chattopadhyaya 1962: 90) relying on the Encyclopeadia of Religion and Ethics, (VII: 194). At the end of the Bālakāṇḍa the washing away of all sins by hearing Rāma's noble deeds is certainly mentioned but Winterniz rightly points out that the first canto was not composed by Vālmīki (Winternitz 1937: 478). Winternitz succinctly points out that in the genuine books (II-VI), Rāmā is only a human hero and that it is only in books I and VII and (in a few interpolated passages of the other books) that he appears as an incarnation of the God Vishṇu (Winternitz 1927: 501); Winternitz (1927: 496) explicitly refers to the statement (496) quoted by Chattopadhyaya and regards it as interpolation. And in later history also the cult of Kṛshṇa is more dominant and popular. Then why should have the more popular and dominant Kṛshṇa-cult devotees at least down to the 4th-5th centuries, (allegedly) acquiesed (If Lal's view is accepted) the overhauling, rather, turning upside-down the genealogies as revealed from the extant Epics and the Purānas which made their Hero God later in time to Rāma ? It needs some explanation at least. It appears to assume to much planned conspiracy and craftiness on the part of the Rāma's bhaktas to tamper so effectively the sacred literature. Then it is usual for bhaktas or discendants to attribute more and more antiquity to their ancestors of cult-hero. If Lal is to be believed the Kṛshṇas powerful adherents are an exception.

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Then another difficulty in accepting Lal's hypothesis also crops up. According to Lal the lowest denominator of all the Rāmāyanic sites is early NBP which could not begin earlier than 700 B.C. I donot think that Lal's case is that Rāma founded the city of Ayodhyā. If there were earlier generations of kings of Ayodhya (Rāma is 64 steps down from Ikshavāku (Pargiter 1922: 145-147) then he could not have settled it first in *circa* 700 B.C., would not Rāma then come too close to the Buddha ?

Thus the archaeology of the Rāmāyaṇa has thrown up a veriable challenge to archaeologists and historians. Lal cannot but truthfully record the evidence unearthed and explain accordingly and that he had done admirably. If modern Ayodhyā, and Śringaverapura are the placenames of Ayodhyā and Śringaverapura of Rāmas time then the excavations show that Rama could not be earlier than 700 B.C. This is a clear archaeological finding. If literature, historical and religious traditions, go counter to this, Lal may retort that this is a problem demanding attention of historians believing in the truth of the traditions to reconcile the archaeological evidence. Pargiter, a great proponant of the value of historical traditions himself had asserted "the general trustworthiness of the tradition is the fact demonstrated, whenever it has been possible to test tradition by results of *'discoveries and excavations'* (italics mine) (Pargiter 1972: 6). Lal has tested the trustworthiness of the traditions by 'discoveries and excavations' and has found the traditions wrong. Lal himself is a believer in historicity of Rāma's story. His work so far has shown that if present Ayodhya and Śringaverapura are the ancient sites of the Rāmāyaṇa times and not mythical or in different geographical setting (I completely agree), his conclusion about the sequence vis-a-vis Rāma's and Kṛshṇa's times has to be accepted. But what I am pleading for is to make the proposed conclusion unassailable, doubts expressed about its correctness could be removed if excavations and explorations were continued at the sites more extensively and thereby 'continue to discover (the grains of truth of the Vedic and Purānic accounts) by long

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and continuous sieving' (Sankalia 1975-76: 85). One has to admit that today the archaeology and literary traditions '(about mutual chronological position of Rāma and Kṛshṇa)' appear to be 'twain' that 'do not meet'. But as East and West have met falsifying Kipling, I am sure in near future we will strive and strive with success to make Archaeology and Tradition about Rāma and Kṛshṇa meet on the same plane of time. I am encouraged by one fact that the Mahabharata and Archaeology have very much concurred. Archaeology and traditions, in case of the Rāmāyaṇa, may not play hide and seek for long.

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THE RĀMĀYANA EPISODE AND ITS ANTIQUITY

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B.B. Lal's excavation at Ayodhyā, Nandigrāma, Bhāradwāja Āśrama Śriṅgaverapura and explorations at Pariyar in Distt. Unnao and Chitrakūṭa have proved that the antiquity of these places do not go beyond Circa 700 B.C. with an exception of Śriṅgaverapura where traces of earlier habitation represented by socalled O.C.P. was found. This led Lal to infer that the Rāmāyaṇa episode then could not be earlier than that period. Thus he placed Rāma later in time than Kṛshṇa. This conclusion though based on sound archaeological footing, notwithstanding the views of those who are not ready to accept the archaeological operations as valid science, deserves a bit probing because it challanges the age old tradition and belief that Rāma was born in *tretā yuga* and Kṛshṇa centuries after in *dwāpara yuga.* Following points therefore are worth considering.

1. While discussing the date of the Māhabhārata in his well known report of Hastinapura (Ancient India Nos. 10 & 11), Lal took into account the geneological list of the Purāṇas. Subsequently he wrote a long article to prove his thesis, taking a low average of 16 years for a generation. It is not known why in the case of Rāmāyaṇa episode he did not take into consideration the Puranic geneological list which contain many generations gap between Rāma and Kṛshṇa.

2. Secondly if we believe that the habitation began at the recently excavated Rāmāyaṇa sites around 700 B.C. we will have to give some time margin for the establishment and growth of the Ikshvāku dynasty of Ayodhyā having glorious tradition about which Rāma and his father were proud of. Notwithstanding a long geneological list of Rāma's dynasty as

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given in the Rāmāyaṇa, we have to take into account such preceding kings as Dilīpa, Bhagiratha, Raghu, Ambarīsha, Nahusha, Aja and Daśaratha. By most conservative estimate, atleast a century if not two would have to be allowed for the evolution and rise of the dynasty before the emergence of Rāma. If we do so then Rāma would be contemporary or near contemporary to Mahāvīra and the Buddha. This would then lead to further complications unless we assume that the entire geneological list is ficticious and bogus.

3. Lal has taken into account only these places as referred to in the Rāmāyaṇa which mainly lie in eastern U.P. But Rāmāyaṇa refers to several places right from the Gandhāra region in the west to Mithilā in the east and far off places of south India. Even if we ignore south India, the places of North-Western India are of utmost importance for that region was the ancient homeland of the Vedic Aryans and even when the Aryans had moved in the east they were familiar with that region. For example the Kekayadeśa (*Rāmāyaṇa* II.68.19-12; VII. 113-114) of the Rāmāyaṇa may be identified with that referred to in the Brāhmāṇas and Upnishads as well as in the Purāṇas (*Matsya* 48.10 20, *Vāyu* 99.12-23). This country was situated between the country of Gandhāra and the Beas (Vipāśā) river. Bharata's mother belonged to this country. Gandhāra country referred to above was another region of interest. This country was situated according to Rāmāyaṇa on either side of river Sindhu (VII. 100. 9-11). This country was conquered by Bharata with the help of his maternal grandfather king Yuddhajīta and maternal uncle prince Aśvapati (VII. 100. 3-5; 101-2). It was a bloody war which lasted more than a week in which about 300 crores of Gandharvas were slain (VII. 100.8). After the conquest Bharata divided that country into two parts and installed his two sons Taksha and Pushkala as kings at newly founded capital town named after them as Takshśilā and Pushkalavatī (modern Charsadā). Excavations have been conducted at both the places by Sir John Marshall and Sir Mortimer Wheeler respectively. Incidently at both the places habitation did not

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go beyond 7th cent. B.C. However, recently F.R. Allchin has located a site in the vicinity of Takshaśilā near Hathiānālā going back to pre-Harappan time yielding Kot-Dijian Complex. Just 8 Kms. away from Takshaśilā is the site of Saraikhola which also yielded pre-Harappan (Kot-Dijian) habitational remains. The Gandhara region has yielded several remains of great antiquity.

4. Are we to ignore the evidence of these places on the ground that they lie far away from Ayodhyā ? Before doing so we may recall that the *Brāhmaṇas* and the *Upanishadas* give a list of ten states from west to east. They are :

1. Gandhāra	2. Kekaya	3. Madra	4. Ushināra
5. Matsya	6. Kuru	7. Pañcāla	8. Kośala
9. Kashī and	10. Videha.		

These states were in existence prior to the rise of the sixteen Mahājanapadas. Further there are references to such places which remain obscure. As we know, a plan was made to install two sons of Lakshmaṇa also as kings. Therefore, country of *Karupath* was conquered and Lakshmana's elder son Angada was made ruler of that country having capital at Angedīyā (it is extremely difficult to identify this country and its capital town). According to the Rāmāyaṇa (VII. 113. 11) the second son of Lakshmaṇa became the ruler of the Malla country with capital at Candrakanta. Though Malla country may be identified, the place Candakanta remains unknown. According to the Mahābhārata the country of Malla was divided into two Parts,–Malla, Country of Kuśāwati and Malla, Country of Pāwā.

As far we know neither karupath nor the Country of Malla was known to the authors of the Brāhmaṇas and Upanishdas and, therefore, are of later time.

5. The P.G.W. is generally associated with the Later Vedic Aryans, while the event of the Rāmāyaṇa according to Prof. Lal seems to have occurred beyond the P.G.W. zone and perhaps in the post-P.G.W. period. If so, we will be made to

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believe that while the Aryans in the western part were using P.G.W., those in the east were using N.B.P.W. along with Black-slipped ware in the east, atbest in C. 700 B.C. Or by the time when the Aryans had moved in the east, they had abandoned the P.G.W.

6. If Rāma was later than Kṛshṇa, how and when Kṛshṇa was made later than Rāma? Even in the list of Daśavatara, Rāma preceeds Kṛshṇa.

7. Even if we accept Prof. Lal's contention we shall have to admit that the *Rāmāyaṇa* was composed prior to the *Mahābhārata* as there is no reference of the *Mahābhārata* or its any character or even in the *Rāmāyṇa*, whereas the *Mahābhārata* does refer to the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its *Ramopākhyāna* (MBH 7.14.3.66). The name of Valmīki also occurs there. Likewise *Rāmāyaṇa* is also not famliar either with the Buddha or any tradition associated with him. The famous towns of Pātaliputra and Sāketa often referred to in the Jain and the Buddhist texts are also unknown to the author of the Rāmāyaṇa. Why is so that the episode of Rāma, an event of later date came into prominence first, than that of the Mahābhārata?

8. While agreeing with Professor Lal that so far our present knowledge is concerned there is only one Ayodhyā and no other. Hence it is just possible that the founder of this town would have sought inspiration from some earlier reference for naming this town, may it be the allegorical expression of a mythical town as referred to in the Atharvaveda (IV. 30. 18) or the *Taittariya* Āraṇyaka. After all one gives name to a newely born babe or a town or house or so on his own ideal view. Thus if the city is of later origin it could get such a name as Ayodhyā. Moreover the Ṛgveda and other Vedas do not provide us the names of villages or places of Aryan exploits or achievements. Does this mean that there were no villages or places in earlier times? Thus it can not be ruled out that there was no place like Ayodhyā in the early period.

I had the opportunity of seeing the excavations at Ayodhya almost in every season. The excavation brought to

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light a large number of seals, sealings, coins and artifacts proving thereby that the place was of great significance from its very inception. It also revealed structural remains of early period suggesting that there was an ancient temple. The last one could be dated to the early medieval period. These facts do prove that the place was considered a holy one. This fact can further be corroborated by the fact that pushyamitra Śuṅga selected a place in Ayodhyā to perform his well known *yajña* in which Patañjali acted as a priest. The epigraphic record of Ranūpali testifies this fact.

9. While there can be now no dispute about the antiquity of Ayodhyā as proved by the archaeological excavations and its association with Rāma story since its beginning, it is possible that a portion of the Ghagra river flowing in the vicinity of Ayodhya was renamed as Saryū (Sarju) after a river referred to in the Ṛgveda (X.64.9) along with Saraswatī and Sindhu as an important rather holy river. Likewise where the Aryans moved eastward they named another river of the Kośala country as Gomatī (R.V. X.75. 6) after a river flowing in the N.W. of the country with same name. Here it may also be recalled that Saraswatī was so dear to the Aryans that they never wanted to lose their association with it. Therefore, it was imagined that it flows underground and joins the Gaṅgā and Yamunā at Prayāga forming a confluence of three rivers termed as *triveṇī*.

The *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa* informs us that *Videgha Māthava* was the first person to ask the fire god (Agni) to reside to the east of the *Sadānīra.* This indicates that the Āryans, particularly their priests, were trying to bring the people of the east (*Vrātyas*) under the influence of the Brāhmanic cult. Book XV of the *Atharvaveda* is known as the Vrātya book and its connection with the Vrātyastoma of the Śrauta books is well established, which makes possible for an unruly half savage community to become Brāhmaṇa.[1] The

1. Cf. Bloomfield, M. '*The Atharvaveda and Gopatha Brāhmana*' Encycl. of *Indo Aryan Research* Vol. II part I B.

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Vrātyastoma was virtually a conversion *stoma* and perhaps politically motivated to admit the non-Āryans to the Āryan way of life. It was not merely a religious ritual, because it implied the ability to pick up the Āryans speech after conversion and not actually the ability to pronounce it correctly[1].

This attempt naturally would have been resisted by the *Vrātya-Rājanyas* of the eastern territories particularly those of *Kāśi* and *Videha*. The revolt would not have been actually against the whole Āryan society but its priestly class which was striving hard to keep the entire society, particularly the ruling class under its influence. This brought a change in the outlook of the Brahmanas. While the *Śatpatha Brāhmaṇa*[2] declared that the sacrifices were useless without the spiritual knowledge and that the Kṣatriyas were higher[3] in position than the *Brāhmaṇas;* the *Taitirīya Brāhmaṇa*[4] laid greater emphasis on oneś *karma* (deed) than the ritual. Ultimately the *Upanishads* emerged condemning the supremacy of the *Brāhmaṇas* decrying the utility of the *Yajñas*. These references are indicative that most probably the ruling class of the Āryan society also joined its hands in the changed setup with the rulers of the non-Āryan community to minimise the influence of the *Brāhmaṇas*. Ultimately quite a large number of the *Brāhmaṇas* appear to have changed their rigid outlook and gradually they themselves became missionary preachers of this neo-Āryanism which subordinated the faith and belief of *Brāhmaṇas* to the new theosophic doctrine. It may be recalled here that the court of Janaka had become a prominent place of philosophical discussions. As the *Upanishadic* account[5] stands though Janaka was an ardent listener of these discourses, nowhere does it appear that he himself was a great scholar of neo-philosophy. However, he tried to understand the intri-

1, Ghosh, N.N. *Indo Aryan Literature and Culture*, P. 12
2. *Sat. Br.* VI, 8,3,10 X, 2,6,19.
3. *Ibid*, XII, 9,11, etc.
4. *Tait, Br.* III, 12,2.
5. *Cf. Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad*, Chapter IV.

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cacies of the neo-philosophical movement and as a patron rewarded amply the scholars who expounded their views successfully. Among all the philosophers who graced his court, Yājñavalkya was perhaps the best, who may be compared for his expositions with Socrates, the renowned Greek philosopher.

The above account proves that the Āryan advancement to Ayodhya and other eastern places could not be much earlier than C.700 B.C.

As has already been said, the Āryan movement towards the east was in stages and by the time they moved beyond Prayāga their ethnic movement became slow and further beyond Sadānīra synchronising with Upanishadic period, it took the shape of cultural expansion. It appears that during this period the Āryans tried to transfrom the entire cultural atmosphere. Their priests, seers, poets and bards (*Kuśilavas*) filled the whole environment with the songs of the glory and adventures of their forefathers which echoed all around so much so that not only their younger generation was overwhelmed but even the natives were enchanted with the lores and they began to admire their heroes. Gradually the whole episode of Rama along with his geographical surroundings was transferred from the land of the *Sapta-Sindhava* and transplanted in the region of Ayodhyā. We can discern similar evidences elsewhere. When the Indians migrated to establish their colonies in the Far East, particularly in the Gupta and post-Gupta periods, they carried with them their legends, place-names and the names of the rivers and transplanted them as a whole in their new lands of settlement to create a new India.

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RĀMA IN LITERATURE : A NOTE ON THE HISTORICITY OF RĀMĀYAṆA

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An analysis of the historicity of the *Rāmāyaṇa* has to begin with a clear assumption that the second epic, the *Mahābhārata,* was brought to its finished form towards the beginning of the Gupta period, But what, one may ask, has it to do with the historical basis of the *Rāmāyaṇa* ? Well, at first, it hardly seems pertinent but there is some significance in it. Among the *Upākhyānas* of the *Mahābhārata* occurs the story of *Rāmāyaṇa*, briefly told but essentially the same as in the other great epic. So we may believe that a Rāma story, much as it is known now a days, was well known at the time of the edition of the *Mahābhārata.* The same fact can be gathered from the Kalidasa's treatment of the story in his *Raghuvaṁśa* and from various references to Rāma in epigraphic and other materials of about the same period. So by the Gupta period the Rāma story was well known in India in much the same form as in present except that, probably, the final disappearance of Sīta under the earth and some elaborations like that has not yet appeared in it.

The Hindu traditon has it that the Rāmāyaṇa is earlier than the *Mahābhārata* and it treats of events which happened long before the great battle of the Paṇḍavas and the Kauravas. The *Mahābhārata* war occurred in the *Kali* Age which began in 3110 B.C. Rāma's defeat of the demon Rāvaṇa, on the one hand, and his death on the other marks the end of the *Tretā* and the beginning of the *Dwāpara* age. Now my calculations may be a little wrong but, according to the system of Hindu chronology as it occurs, for instance, in the *Mānava Dharmaśāstra*, the date of this event would be 867102 B.C., almost a million years ago; that is

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to say, at the time, when the first pre-historic man was just about beginning to chip the first very crude stone tool. This is obviously impossible. But the tradition that Rāma was the 7th *Avatāra* and Kṛshṇa was the 8th of the God vishṇu, has led to a very widespread belief, among Indians and some western scholars too, that Rāma himself lived before the *Mahābhārata* war. Thus, now from the historians point of view, this proposition has not much to commend.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* may be earlier than some of the interpolations of the *Mahābhārata*, but the main narrative of the *Mahābhārata* seems to be pretty earlier than the main narrative of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For one thing, it represents a style earlier than the Rāmāyaṇic style. The *Mahābhārata* is pretty close to the style of some of the hymns of *Atharvaveda* and the earlier *Upaṇishadas*, such as *Kakataka Upaṇishada*. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, on the other hand, really transpasses Paṇini, and the rules of grammar and its style is much more sophisticated, often close to the style of the earlier *Kāvya* poetry much as that of Kālīdāsa. It also contains many of the conventions of *Kāvya*, for instance, the description of the six seasons which occurs in the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Vālmīki is often called the *Ādi-Kavi* and his *Rāmāyaṇa* the Ādi-*Kāvya*. and, from this tradition, people of thought suggest that it is very ancient. It means nothing of the kind. It has been perpetually correct that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the *Ādi-Kāvya*. But we use the '*Kāvya*' in the sense in which it was used in the early and medieval India, as a very ornate courtly poem. Probably the *Rāmāyaṇa* is the oldest *Kāvya* we have, from that point of view. And that, Valmiki, or who ever he was, is therefore the *Ādi-Kavi*. As the *Mahābhārata* is not a *Kāvya* but the *itihāsa*, and so there is a sharp distinction between the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

Let us look at the general picture which the narrative parts of the *Mahābhārata* give of life as compared with that of the *Rāmāyaṇa* We have the description of the courts of

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Hastinapur and Indraprastha where a king, who is really little more than the tribal cheif, involves in wild and roundly debates and disputes with his hunchmen and underlings and in enormous gambling bouts at which the whole kingdom is gambled away. In a way it gives us a reflection of a period of unruly tribal chieftains who were just beginning to settle down as regular kings. Let as compare that with the court of Daśaratha or Janaka in the *Rāmāyaṇa* where everything is formal & ceremonious, its great luxury and beautiful palaces, women's quarters very well separated from the main part of the palace and all sorts of formal prologues in dealings with the kings; obviously a far more developed society than that reflected in the *Mahābhārata*. So all the evidences go to show that, if we omit the interpolations, the *Rāmāyaṇa* is later than the *Mahābhārata*, despite the tradition.

Now it is common knowledge that the *Rāmāyaṇa* is not a unitary work but at the same time it is not a text like the *Mahābhārata*, which has been developed and built up by interpolations and additions over the course of centuries. Its structure is simpler from that point of view. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, as we know, contains comparatively few important interpolations but, on the other hand, it has two fairly obvious stratum in its composition. It is divided into 7 cantos or books called *Kāṇḍas* and, of these the first, dealing with Rama's birth, childhood and marriage, the *Bālakāṇḍa*, and the 7th, treating the events after their return to Ayodhyā and the expulsion of Sītā and so on, are clearly different in character from the other five i. e., 2 to 6 *khaṇḍas*, which describe the main events of the story.[3]

The difference between the Ist and the 7th *kaṇḍas*, on the one hand, and the rest, on the other, is not only in terms of stylistic developments but also in the treatment of the hero and in the divinities referred to therein. In the main body, from : to 6, there are gods who lost favour from the Gupta times onwards and fell in the scale of devotion, so to speak. Brahmā & Indra play quite an important part; they are very

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significant in the mythology of the times. In *Kaṇḍas* 1 and 7, the greatest of the gods is Viṣhnu while Brahmā and Indra, take a second place. Very definitely, merely over the central cantos from 2 to 6, except for a few passages which can be explained away as interpolations, in general Rāma appears as a human hero, of course in view of the fact that he lived thousands and thousands of years ago, From the point of view of the composer of the story he was far stronger, far better, far more moral than we are and moreover he was closer with the divinity, with gods, because the gods were closer to men in those days. So Rāma has a lot of divine help. He has the blessing of gods but, by and large, he is a human being. In the 1st & 7th cantos, on the other hand, it is clearly and explicitly stated that he is the god Vishṇu, who has taken human form; he is an *avatāra* and he is completely divinised. From this we have to assume that there was an earlier version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* consisting of only *kāṇḍas* from 2 to 6. And later, after the prestige of Rāma had grown considerably, somebody added 1 and 7, converting the hero into an *avatāra.*

Now if we compare the final version, including cantos 1 and 7, of the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* with certain other versions of the story, we do see a few other significant differences. The story in the *Mahābhārata* of the *Rāmopakhyāna* is interesting in this connection; it does recognise Rāma as full incarnation of Vishṇu. So this idea was getting popular at least in the Gupta period. However, the accout of the testing of Sītā, after her ordeal in the Rākshasa's palace, is no part of the *Mahābhārata* version. There Rāma merely accepts the assurance of gods that she has remained pure and he does not put her through any ordeal. This is an interesting point because it shows how, as time passed on, more puritanical Hindus and the Brahmaṇas were beginning to feel that this story perhaps was not quite right as it stood, because it did not quite fit in with the moral concepts which they held at that time; hence the account of the exile of Sītā and her ultimate return to her mother, earth. It is evidently the last part of the story to obtain

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general acceptance.[4] Even Bhavabhūti in his 8th century drama, the *Uttara-Rāmacarita*, omits the final disappearance of Sītā and ends his story with reunion of Rāma and Sītā after the birth of Kuśa and Lava.

It would seem that the original *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa* discribes the exile of the righteous prince of Ayodhyā with his wife and brother, their adventures in the forest, the capture of Sītā by Rāvaṇa, the conquest of Laṅkā and their triumph and return to Ayodhyā and that was the end of it. It was probably in this form that the story was in existence before the Christian era, since we can see the developments as it were already there in the Gupta times. Our precise aim of analysing its historical contents is to identify the process of their inclusion so that if it could be divested of its supernatural or impossible elements it may ultimately approximate the reality.

Nobody seemingly believes in supernatural now-a-days. It is hard to accept that Rāvaṇa had ten heads or that he flew through the air in a chariot drawn by asses. One may, however, accept that Rāvaṇa was a real being and that Rāvaṇa was some nasty barbarian Tamil chieftain for instance or something like that. This will imply the existence of an account of an adventure of a brave and righteous prince, wrongly exiled from his potrimony who brought Āryan arms to South India and Ceylon, which were then inhabited by the Dravidians, represented by the Rākshasas, and he conquered the Dravidian people with the aid of an army of tribal people presumably proto-Austroloids, represented by the monkeys, who, in fact, were not really monkeys at all but backward tribals with monkey totem and then, of course, he returned to the North to regain his Kindom on the death of his father.

Cultural anthropologists and archaeologists have pointed out that we get no evidence what so ever for the penetration of any sort of Āryan influence into South India or Ceylon at this period, which according to traditional accounts must be dated well before the time of the Buddha. And so an interes-

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ting theory has been put forward lately that the Laṅkā was not actually Ceylon at all but some place or the other in Madhya pradesh. Though it makes the story a good deal more feasible, but it remains dubitable that if anybody at the time when that story was being composed in the early century or before the beginning of the Christian era, really had any doubts that Laṅkā was Ceylon especially, as in his search for Sītā, Hanumāna also went to Jāvā, which is quite clearly referred to as Yavadvipa. If Hanumāna had to go as far as Jāvā before he found Sītā and she was all the while somewhere in Madhya Pradesh, this seems rather a waste of effort. If you are looking for somebody the obvious thing is to organise a search in immediate locality first and then work outwards. Obviously this suggestion does not have much logic to support it. When Vālmīki, or whoever it was, Composed this poem he certainly thought in terms of Ceylon as the place where Sītā was imprisoned.

Well now let us admit that the story of the fight with the Rākṣasas and the capture of Sītā, the return of Sītā, the destruction of Rāvaṇa, and so on, may reflect squarely the Āryanisation of South India & ceylon. It may reflect events which perhaps were frequently happening around the time when the *Rāmāyaṇa* was being composed in the early centuries B.C. We have other evidence of this in the traditional geneology of the Pallava Kings. In various tales we have from Ceylon–the story of the first colonisation of Ceylon and so on—now again small bands of Āryan warriors did find their way into the Deccan and into the Tamil country and sometimes on to Ceylon and there they would manage to make themselves the leaders of the tribal people of that area. It was through the migrations of these people alongwith the priests, the Buddhist and the Jaina monks where by elements of Āryan culture were brought into South and it could be suggested that the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa* (or that part of the story) reflects the knowledge of the person who is composing it, that this sort of thing was going on. But that it reflects the adventure of an actual historical chieftain, who did all the things he was supposed to have done in the

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Deccan and in the Ceylon, is another matter and that we shall have to consider in greater details.

In order to get further information on this point one may have a look at the later Vedic literature, composed much nearer the time when these events were seemingly taking place, and see what evidence we can get for the actors of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. While we do get a bit of confirmation for some of the *Mahābhārata* characters, of the many characters of the *Rāmāyaṇa* only one occurs in the Vedic literature. He is neither Daśarath, nor Rāma, but Rāma's reputed father-in-law Janaka, king of Videha, who was a great patron of the new maystical teachers, such as Yājñavalkya, and who is referred to in various contexts in the later Vedic literature notably the *Vṛihadāraṇyaka Upanishada.* Janaka also figures as a philosopher king in early Buddhist and Jaina traditions. It would seem that he lived around 700 B. C. and was definitely a historical figure ruling over North Bihar.[5]

But Sītā, the daughter of Janaka, according to later legend, is no where mentioned as such in the Vedic literature. We do get a minor goddess Sītā, the patron goddess of ploughing and ploughed land. Our Sītā emerged from the earth in the ploughing festival and this legend may well have been inserted into the text at a compatatively late date. Persons with 'Rāma' as a component of their name certainly do occur in the *Vedas* but none of them can be identified with the Rāma of the epic, and Rāma's father, Daśaratha, is not mentioned at all nor are his brothers.

Only one parallel tradition of respectable antiquity does tell us a version of the Rāma story. This is to be found in the Pāli *Jātaka* tales. At first, no doubt, the *Jātaka* tales were just floating oral stories. Then the custom arose among the story telling monks of introducing verses too in order to finish off the tale or to point the moral or something like that. These verses were memorised and passed from one monk to another. Some had only one verse to them, others had a large number

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of verses, and ultimately all these verses were collected and the collection was included in the *Khuddaka-nikāya.* Later brief outlines of stories in prose were added as a sort of commentary.

The well known collection of stories which every student knows something about is in fact the prose *Jātaka*, the most remarkable collection of short stories of any literature of antiquity. Even according to tradition the prose *Jātaka* is not very ancient, though like the *Mahābhārata* and other texts it does contain a great deal of ancient tradition. Certainly, as it stands, it comes in the class as one of the oldest parts of the Pali Canon. But we know that the *Jātaka* stories were popular at least as early as 2nd century B. C., because they are illustrated on the railings of Bhārhut and later at Sānchi. It has been suggested that the general cultural background of the *Jātakas* may fit in with conditions of about this time. But the fact remains that many of the stories are handed down from a much earlier period. And there is little reason to doubt the tradition that the text of the verses at any rate were taken to Ceylon in the older form in the 3rd century B.C.

Now it is here in the *Pāli Jātaka* that we find this strange story of Rāma. It is known as the *Daśaratha Jātaka*, which numbers 461 of the collection. Following is a brief summary of the story.[6] There was a virtuous King of Banaras—note Banaras not Ayodhya. His name is Daśaratha. By his chief queen he has three children. Their names were Rama Pandita, Lakhana and Sīta. The queen died and the king married again. By his second queen, who is not named, another son, Bharata, was born. When Bharata was born the king was extremely pleased and he promised the second queen to give her any boon she wished. The second queen was a crafty woman and she said, 'I don't want you to give me this boon now. I will like to have it at a later' time. And when the prince Bharata was seven years old then she reminded Daśaratha of the boon that he had promised her. She wanted him to fulfil it and he said, "Alright, I will", and of course, her request was that Daśaratha

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should coronate Bharata as *Yuvarāja*, the heir to the throne, instead of Rāma. Daśaratha flatly refused it. There is no trace of the terrible conflicts of conscience which Daśaratha had in the *Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa*. He had no intention of granting this boon because he knew that it was a fundamentally wrong thing to do and a promise which could not be kept without seriously infringing upon the moral law was best broken. This intention of keeping ones word, which is a peculier feature of the Āryan tradition, does not occur in the pāli story of Rāma. When Daśaratha did not grant the queen her boon she became very angry and she constantly conspired against him and made life difficult all around. She became so embittered that Daśaratha feared that she was plotting against the lives of his three elder children. She was plotting against the life of Rāma & Lakhana, not against Sītā because she wasn't so important. So he sent Rāma and Lakhana away and told them to live in hiding as hermits in the forest for 12 years and then to return and claim the kingdom; this 12 year datum was suggested as a soothsayer had prophesied that he had exactly 12 years to live. When Sīta heard about the departure of her two brothers she said, "I will like to come along too and cook for you and generally take care of your welfare." And so she also went along. The three exiles went away escorted by a great throng of sympathetic and sorrowful townsfolk, as in the Vālmīki story, and they went to a hermitage in the Himālayas not in Daṇḍaka. Rāma is in charge of the group being the eldest brother. He sat in the hut all the time meditating on higher things while the other two brought him food. King Daśaratha proved the prophesy wrong and died in the 9th year of Rāma's exile. Subsequently the queen gave orders to coronate Bharata as the king. But Bharata was thoroughly loyal to his brother and he went with his army to fetch back Rāma. Rāma had by then got completely emancipated from all worldly attachment. Thus, when Bharata told him that Daśaratha was dead he did not even wink an eye. He was completely unmoved. But the other two, Lakhana and Sītā, were shocked to severe grief. Rāma said that he was quite happy where he was and he had

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promised his father that he would step away for 12 years. He would, therefore, keep his words. He gave Bharata his slippers which Bharata took back and placed on the throne and the slippers ruled the land, Bharat acting as its agent. There is an interesting little story about the slippers, which does not occur in the Vālmīki version. Interestingly whenever a case was being judged and Bharata gave a false judgement the slippers would jump into the air and strike together and so the case was tried again; "when Bharata gave a correct judgement they remained on the throne. This went on for three years and then Rāma returned to the capital and became the king. Sītā was made his Akkamahisi, a term used for the chief queen, and they reigned righteously for 16 thousand years.

This story of Rāma as transmitted by Buddhist monks in India down to about 2nd century B.C. has some obvious omissions. Thus, the thousand doller question is as to why not these monks bring in Rāvana, the capture of Sītā, the monkey army, the great battle, and the reunion of Sītā and Rāma? Why didn't they use them? They were looking for interesting and existing stories. They did not in the least mind portraying battles and fighting as long as it was of the right kind because they were not quite getting those stories for the Buddhist monks but for the Buddhist laymen, who would not be bound by rules of absolute non-violence. There may be many explanations but the only explanation that we can think of for the omission of the most exciting incidents from the story is that at the time when the *Jātaka* collection was being compiled the full form of this story either did not exist or was only circulating in very narrow circles and certainly had not spread far and wide over India, as it did soon after.

It has been, however, very strongly suggested that the Buddhists did not like the Hindus and, therefore, they wanted to degenerate Rāma by making things look silly. But this certainly was not the case because Rāma was portrayed as the previous incarnation of the Buddha. He was, from their point of view, the absolute paragon of righteousness. Obviously

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the only explanation one can think of is that when this story was collected by the Buddhists the Vālmīki story just was not there. Nobody had thought it up. The story of Rāma, as it was first circulated in contemporary India, was a story without Rāvaṇa, without the capture of Sītā and without the conquest of Laṅkā.

There are several features of the story which needs to be looked at. The scene of the events is Banaras, not Ayodhyā. This is not very surprising because four-fifth of the 500 odd *Jātaka* stories are centered in and around Banaras. It is quite clear that the monks picked up stories from all over the place and they changed their locale on behalf of Banaras. This importance of Banaras may be explained by suggesting that the *Jātaka* tales were first collected around the great site of Sāranāth, which from very early times was one of the most important pilgrimage centres of Buddhism. One may assert, therefore, that the popular story actually had it that Rāma's headquarter was Ayodhyā and this may have been changed to Banaras at a later date simply out of habit.

A second feature where the Buddhistic story differs from the Brāhmaṇical one is Daśaratha's motive in sending Rāma away. As pointed out earlier, we have absolutely no semblance of this intense inner conflict of Daśaratha as he is not going to be true to his words at the cost of injustice to his son. He knows clearly what he is going to do. This seemingly is the original version. The story of this intense inner conflict suggests rather a sophisticated psychological approach which looks to us to be a bit later in origin and more developed than this Buddhistic version. However, the Brāhmaṇical story is much more dramatic than the Buddhist one, which is suggestive of a more careful and better organised composition apparently at a later date.

Another significant point is the location of the hermitage in the Himalayas. This is very hard to explain unless the Buddhist story is taken as the original version because there

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would be good reason, if one wanted to bring in the story of the conquest of Lanka, to alter it from Himalayas to Daṇḍaka, which is on the way to Lanka. There would not be a good reason to alter the scenario from the Daṇḍaka to the Himalayas. And so we are inclined to think that the first version of the Rāma story had the three persons go upto the Himalayas and not to Daṇḍaka.

The incident of Rāma's slippers being placed on the throne occurs in both the versions. The Pāli version has, however, the fantastic story of the slippers clapping together. One is hard pressed to interpret this incident very clearly especially if one thinks that its very near the original story. It may be very early elaboration, which the author of the *Rāmāyaṇa* had not heard of or decided to leave out for his own reasons.

The most surprising of the differences is that Sītā Comes as the sister, and not the wife, of Rāma until the very end and then she marries him. Such brother and sister marriages occur quite frequently in the Pāli text.[7] We also get references to them in certain portions of the Vedic literature. We can put forward a very tentative suggestion about Sītā being the sister of Rāma along these lines. This must have been an earlier version of the story—making Sītā Rāma's wife. Possibly on moral grounds pertaining to the views on rights and wrongs of consanguinous marriage a development occurred to change Sītā from sister to wife. There would be no good reason to change her from wife to sister. Now, how can one explain this ? We can only put forward one suggestion that this aspect of the Buddhist story is a moulded recollection of the system of matrilineal form of succession. Remnants of this survive in the hills of Assam and in Kerala as we all know. Among the 16 Khasi chieftains, chieftainship of the so called states, and they are hardly more than 3 or 4 villages but they call themselves still, in Meghalaya, as it is now called, we have two important persons in the group. One is the main gene, the priest-the chief, and another is a lady called Tāj, who is the chief's sister.

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She is responsible chiefly for the religious aspects of the state, so to speak, because they are very small states, and is a sort of priestess, who conducts the ceremony and at the same time it is to her that the line continues. It is not the son of this gene who becomes the next gene but the son of the some Tāj. This gene has a wife and the Tāj has a husband. But they are comparatively insignificant. It is this brother and sister group which is the most important people of that world. Things were rather similar on the coast of Travancore and Cochin. Now we have got something like this reflected in the Buddhist story of Rāma and Sītā. One difficulty would be that the whole story of the queen and so on would be pointless because it would not be Rāma who inherited the throne from Daśaratha. The story seems to contain the vestiges of a system in which the king's sister plays a tremendously important part in the affairs of the state and seemingly this story represents a line of chief of visibly non-Āryans who had accepted Āryan culture but still retained quite a few of their own customs including this one, which placed immense emphasis upon the ruling king's sister. That Sītā became the *Akkāmahiṣi* need not imply that she became the wife of Rāma, but merely that she shared the honour of the state with him.

In any case nothing in any Vedic or early Buddhist or other texts give any support to the rest of the story. In Chinese Buddhism there is a story about a certain prince and princess and latter's abduction by a demon and, how with the aid of an army of monkeys he won her back, no names given. And this seems clearly to reflect the other part of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. This story, in more or less in the same version as we have it, was taken to China. It existed among the Mahāyāna Buddhists, too. But it seems that of the someone among the Buddhists, later on, got hold of the whole version of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story and utilised the Rāvaṇa story as a separate story altogether.

It is difficult, therefore, to escape the conclusion that the *Daśaratha Jātaka* gives us an earlier form of the story than the version appropriated by Vālmīki, which seems to be the

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work of a very brilliant poet and story teller who used other exciting themes to make its effect more telling. He was extremely successful in doing this and posterity has shown it with a tremendous amount of love and enthusiasm.

But let us free our minds from illusion. Rāvaṇa is not much maligned Tamil chieftain. He is a demon, a fierce enemy of the gods. He has hardly any historical foundation.[8] Similarly Rāma's army of monkeys, led by the heroic Hanumāna, are not proto-Austrotoids, South Indian tribesmen, but they are monkeys, first monkeys, monkey with long tail and hair covered bodies, as the popular producers of Hindu religious illustrations know so well. It was a well accepted view in ancient India, and it probably continued down to the modern times, that in older times the animals were bigger and cleaverer and they could think and speak like men.

So, with due reverence and apologies if I have hurt any feeling or destroyed and cherished illusion, I put forward my hypothetical reconstruction of the historical basis of the *Rāmāyaṇa* story. There was a historical king of Ayodhyā, named Daśaratha. Probably he lived around 7th cent. B.C. As a result of intrigues his eldest son Rāma, a righteous young man, probably accompanied with his brother and sister, was forced to leave the kingdom and live in exile for a long time. Later he returned to his patrimony and became such a good and popular ruler that he was remembered by posterity.

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2. A.L. Basham, *The Wonder That was India*, Delhi, 1917, pp. 409-417.
3. D.R. Chanana, *Slavery in Ancient India*, New Delhi, 1960, p. 9.
4. *Mahābhārata Sānti Parva.*
5. Upendra Thakur, *History of Mithila*, Darbhanga, 1956, p. 30 ff.
6. Fausbol, *Jatakas*, IV, no. 461.
7. Sukumar Sen, *Rāmakathāra Prāk-Itihās*, p. 68
8. *Rāmāyaṇa*, V. 10. 15, 24
9. This Position was sought to be rationalised by the authors of *Rāmāyaṇa* VI. 37-33-35

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THE VISIT OF RĀMA TO PRAYĀGA

(**Based on Sanskrit Literature**)

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Prayāga has played a vital role in national integration and lived upto its high traditions by attracting countless people, devoted to literary and cultural pursuits from all parts of the country. Seldom has a centre of pilgrimage and learning enjoyed such a high reverence as this renowned 'Tīrtharāja', through all the ages of its radiant history.

Vālmīki is the first writer who described the topography of Prayāga, its neighbouring regions and also some important sites situated, somewhat, distantly from it, while giving an eloquent account of the journey of Rāma to this centre of pil grimage on his way to Chitrakūta and back from it. Amongst the subsequent writers who describe Rāma's visit to Prayāga, mention may be made of Kalidāsa and Bhavabhūti, figuring prominently in Sanskrit literature. It is clear from their descriptions of the event that their account is substantially based on Vālmīki's Rāmāyṇa and also on oral traditions prevalent in their times. The significant point to note is that they provide to us an account of Prayāga as seen by them.

Tirtha but not a city

The testimony of these poets suggest that during the visit of Rāma as well as in the subsequent times it was only 'Tīrtha' but not a city. The Mahābhārata mentions that it was the most sacred and foremost of all the 'Tīrthas' in the three worlds.[1] This was held as sacred and flanked by two rivers,

1. Mahābhārata, Van Parva, ch 85, V. 19

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namely Gaṅgā and Yamunā. This text mentions the site of the confluence for the first time as 'Saṅgama'.[1]

Route to Prayāga

On his way from Ayodhyā to Prayāga, Rāma reached Śṛingaverapūra which is to be identified with modern Singraur, situated on the northern bank of the river Gaṅgā at a distance of twenty five miles from Allahabad. Here he spent a night with Sīta under a shady *'Iṅgudī'* tree on a bed of sacred grass prepared by Lakshmaṇa who kept watch the whole night. After crossing the river the next morning, the three reached its southern bank where there was a ***banyan tree***. Later, Bharata also reached Śṛiṅgaverapura along with his large retinue and at the same ferry here be embarked into boats of finest-build decorated with gay flags and hanging bells.

It may be mentioned here that the site of the *'Iṅgudī'*[2] tree was regarded as a sacred place and has been mentioned in the subsequent literature also; e.g. the Uttara Rāmacarita of Bhavabhūti. In this work Rāma is reported as saying to Lakshmaṇa that 'this is the same *Iṅgudī* tree in the boundaries of Śṛingaverapura where we met our affectionate friend, Guha, the king of Nisādas.

In the Raghuvaṁśa of Kālidāsa, Śṛingaverapura is mentioned as 'the city of the king of the Nishādas'. It was here that Rāma had taken out his diadem and put on his matted hair. At this pathetic and the touching scene, Sumanta had wept bitterly and remarked that the ardent wishes of crooked Kaikeyī had been fulfilled indeed.[3]

From the description of Vālmīki, it appears that there was a banyan tree (*Nyagrodha*) on the southern bank of the river Gaṅgā. It faced Śṛingaverpura and would have been situated at a distance of at least twentyfive miles to the west of Prayaga

1. Ibid, Vana Parva, ch. 85, V. 18.
2. Uttar-Ramacharita, Act 1, V. 21.
3. Raghuvaṁśa, Canto XIII, V. 59.

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along the course of this river. Rāma crossed it in a boat and reached the southern bank when he halted along with Sīta and Lakshmaṇa under this tree in the midst of the flowering trees and creepers in a splendid forest. In the neighbourhood they also saw the charming view of a lovely lake with bright lotus flowers. They spent the night under the tree and the next morninng they left for the hermitage of Bharadvāja[1].

The Hermitage of Bhāradvāja

From the description of Vālmīki, it appears that there was a continuous belt of forest from the banyan tree to the āshrama of Bhāradvāja. This has been described in the text as a great dense forest (*sumahadvanam*). It was after crossing this forest that Rāma and subsequently Bharata had reached the hermitage of the sage. Prayāga has been described in the text as a land of confluence of two rivers (Bhāgīrathī and Yamunā)[2]. He received Rāma with delicious berries and fruits of various kinds available in the forest around the hermitage and arranged for his stay in a cottage.[3]

Bhāradvāja had also made a suggestion to Rāma to live with him in the home of hermits there and feel happy at the holy and beautiful space between the confluence of the two rivers[4]. Rāma, however, rejected the idea because not being far from Ayodhyā, the citizens would pour in large number and thus the solitude of the hermitage would be disturbed.[5] At this stage, the sage advised him to live at a holy mount which was exceedingly fair and situated ten leagues away from Prayāga. It was widely known as Citrakūṭa and was a rival of Gandhamādana's fame.[6]

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1. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 13, VV. 53-54.
2. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 54, V. 2.
3. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 54, V. 18.
4. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 54, V.2.
5. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 54, V.22.
6. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 54, VV.28-29.

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Vālmīki has narrated very carefully the various kinds of trees and creepers which were to be found in the premises of the hermitage, such as Chaitraratha, Vilva, Mārdaṅgika, Aśvatha, Tāla, Tilaka, Śiśupa, Āmalaka, Jambu, Mālatī and Mallikā etc. In the hermitage, Bhāradvāja was sitting in the midst of several hermits who were his pupils. After the completion of the period of exile of fourteen years, Rāma again visited the hermitage of the sage along with Sītā and Lakshmaṇa in order to worship the sage on his way back to his ancestral capital. This not only indicates the impressiveness of Bhāradvāja as renowned seen (Mahamunih) but also the significance of his Āshrama as a place of pilgrimage. In the Yuddhakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa, he has again been described as a recluse of great anchorite achievements. From him he enquired, if he would enlighten him about the well being of Bharata, his mother and also the citizens of Ayodhyā.[1] From the description of Vālmīki, it is clear that Gaṅgā was flowing close to the hermitage which was situated on its bank itself.

Some important sites

Vālmīki mentions some important sites of Prayāga which were on way to Citrakūta, namely a 'ghāta' (ferry) on the northern bank of Yamunā and a banyan tree renowned as '*Śyāma Nyagrodha*', '*Yamunā Vana*' and '*Nīla-kānana*' on the southern bank of this river. It is significant to note that the Rāmāyaṇa is silent about the existence of any unperishable banyan tree renowned as 'Akṣaya-vaṭa' on the confluence of the two rivers. While explaining the route of the ferry, Bhāradvāja directed Rāma first to go to the confluence and then take a turn to the right and walk a little distance on the bank of the Yamunā up the stream to the west. This would bring him to a '*ghāta*' which was worn out on account of being too old. There he would halt for sometime in order to prepare a raft for crossing the Yamuna.[2] From this description, it

1. Rāmāyāṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 124, V. 2.
2. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, V. 5.

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appears that it was not a regular ferry where boats could have been available and that pilgrims would have to face great practical difficulties in crossing the river. The two brothers collected bamboo poles and timber logs for preparing a raft on which they had placed all their belongings. When they had propelled the raft to the mid-stream, Sīta had prayed the Yamunā for the safe reurn of her husband to his ancestral capital. They succeeded in crossing the river Yamunā which was flowing swiftly and full of waves and reached southern bank. They left the raft and with their luggage passed through forest which abounded in trees and had grown on the bank of the river.[1]

Śyāma Nyagrodha

This banyan tree was situated on the southern bank of the Yamunā where the pilgrims reached after crossing the Yamunā. This tree stood in the midst of many other trees and was held as a sacred site, always flocked by saints and hermits.[2] Bāhradvāja had suggested that Jānakī would pray there for its blessings.[3] After crossing the Yamunā, they reached this wide-spreading dark banyan tree whose shade was cool and pleasing. With folded hands Sītā prayed 'O mighty tree I bow down before you. Kindly allow my husband to complete his vow so that I may have the good luck of seeing my respected mothers-in-law Kauśalyā and Śumitrā'.[4] It may be mentioned here that the banyan tree (Śyāma Vata) as described by Vālmīki in the Rāmāyaṇa would have been the earliest banyan tree at Prayāga which was held as a sacred site.

In the thirteenth canto of the Raghuvaṁśa, Kālidāsa mentions the important sites which were seen by Rāma on his way back from Laṅkā to Ayodhyā, The graceful dark banyan tree was one such site. In this work, Rāma is reported as saying to Sītā : 'this is the same banyan tree, known as *Śyāma-vata*

1. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 35, VV. 1-2.
2. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 35, V. 7.
3. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 35, V. 7.
4. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 35, VV. 24-25.

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whose help was solicited by you on the former occasion'. Covered with fruits, it appears like a heap of emeralds mixed with rubies.[1] Would this suggest that this sacred banyan tree stood on its site for several centuries from the time af Vālmīki to the age of Kalidāsa (fourth Century A.D.) ?

Bhavabhūti also locates this tree on the southern bank of the Yamunā on the route leading to Citrakūta. Lakshmaṇa is reported as saying to Rāma in this celebrated work : 'this is the dark banyan tree on the bank of the Kālindī by the side of the route leading to Citrakuta to which our attention was drawn by the Sage Bhāradvāja[2]. From the account of Yuan-Chwang who visited India in early part of the seventh Century A.D. we learn that near the confluence there had grown a new banyan tree which was called '*Akṣyavata*' (imperishable tree) on the site of the confluence of the two rivers at Prayāga. It is this banyan tree which has highly been eulogised by the Agni Purāṇa, Kūrma Purāṇa and others. The evidence suggests that the original banyan tree (*Śyāma Nyagrodha* or *Śyāma-vata*) mentioned by Vālmīki had perished by this time. Its importance was replaced by the banyan tree (*Akshya-vata*) on the site of the confluence of the two rivers. The above reference of Bhavabhūti about the site of the banyan tree, therefore, appears to have been based on the description of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa with which he was thoroughly familiar.

Yamunā-Vana

To the west of the 'Śyāma-vaṭa' along the course of the river Yamunā up to the distance of a Krośa (two miles) there was a forest which has been mentioned as '*Yamunā-Van*' in the Rāmāyaṇa.[3] After taking rest for a brief while under '*Śyāma-vaṭa*' Rāma reached *Yamunā-vana* along with Lakshmaṇa and Sītā. This forest was adorned with creepers, plants and trees

1. Raghuvaṁsa, Canto 13, V. 53.
2. Uttara-Ramcharita, Act I.
3. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, V. 32.

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bearing flowers and fruits of various kinds. Rāma and Lakshamaṇa crossed this forest extending over a Krośa (two miles), enjoyed natural scenes there and preyed upon animals of various kinds.[1]

Nīla-Kānana

After this they reached another forest on the bank of the river Yamunā, known as *Nīla-kānana*. It abounded in bamboo and trees of various kinds, such as Palāśa, Sāla, Badarī (jujube) and Yāmuna.[2] The rout through these two forests (i.e. *Yamunā-vana Nīla-kānana*) went straight to Citrakūṭa and Bhāradvāja had trodden it several times on his way to this sacred place. Although the path of Citrakūṭa passed through forest, it was fairly pleasant and attractive on account of its natural scenes. It was free from dangers and also was smooth and soft.[3]

The 'Sangama' of Prayāgā

From the description of Vālmīki, it appears that the Gaṅgā was flowing close to the hermitage of Bhāradvāja and that it stood on its bank. The confluence of the two rivers was reached by the pilgrim after walking a little distance from the Āshrama. On his way to Citrakūṭa from Śṛingaverapura, Rāma followed by Lakshmaṇa and Sītā walked along the course of the Gaṅgā when smoke arising out of the sacrificial ritual of Bhāradvāja and the sound produced by the mingling of the two rivers became audible to them. This suggests the proximity of the hermitage to the bank of Gaṅgā[4]. The topography of Prayāga supplies clear and definite indications to the fact that the Gaṅgā has now changed its original course. The declinity of the land at the foot of the mound where the Bhāradvāja Āshrama stands and similar continuous downward slope suggests that originally this river was flowing close to the Āshrama.

1. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, V. 8.
2. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, V. 9.
3. Rāmāyaṇa, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, V. 9.
4. Ibid, Ayodhyākāṇḍa, Canto 55, VV. 4-5.

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On his way back from Citrakūṭa, Rāma again visited Prayāga and paid his respects to the great sage while giving an eloquent account of this return journey, Kālidāsa provides to us a thrilling and inspiring description of the site of the confluence of Sita (white) and Asita (blue) rivers. "Look here, O lady of faultless limbs, here is the stream of the Gaṅgā which with its currents broken by the waves of the Yamunā appears at one place like a necklace full of pearls interwoven with emralds covering them with splendour; at another place like a chaplet of white lotuses the interval of which is set with blue ones. In some places, it looks like a row of birds fond of the Mānasa lake, coming in contact with the geese having dark grey wings, in another it appears like a piece of ground ornamented with white sandle, and bearing on it, ornamental leaves painted with black sandle paste. Somewhere it appears like the splendour of the moon variegated by darkness lying in the shade; at another it looks like a white streak of autumnal cloud through the openings in which the surface of the sky is little discernible. And in some others, it looks like the body of Śiva anointed with ashes and adorned with black snakes.[1] Persons with their souls purified by bathing at the confluence of the two rivers of the ocean, are never indeed again confined in body even without obtaining the true knowledge of Supreme Being after they have left their mortal flames".[2] This incidental reference to the Sangama of Prayāga, while Rāma happened to pass through it, testifies to the general belief of the people who inspired by it even now assemble here in large number from all parts of the country for ablution at the site of the confluence of the two rivers.

In conclusion it may be observed as under :

1. The above discussion is mainly based on Vālmiki's knowledge of the topography of Prayāga. Since his account relates to Rāma's visit to Prayāga, he may be supposed as relying on deep-rooted oral traditions which were handed down

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1. Raghuvaṁśa, Canto 13, VV. 54-57.
2. Ibid, Canto 13, V. 58.

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to his times (somewhere in the pre-Buddha age) from generation to generation. It will be most reasonable to believe that the topography of Prayāga as presented in Valmikī's Rāmāyaṇa bears the impress of traditional accounts which in all probability date back to the times of Rāma. Thus the topography of the holy Prayāga as prepared by Vālmīki in his Rāmāyaṇa may be said to be considerably close to, and a reasonable faithful reflection of the topography as it was during or soon after the life of the hero of his epic.

2. The Rāmopākhyāna of the Mahābhārata (Ch. 273–93) and Dasaratha Jātaka which contain a condensed form of the Rāma-kathā of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa suggest a popular belief of those days in the historicity of Rāma to a reasonable extent.

3. When Kālidāsa and Bhavabhūti are giving the account of Prayāga at time of Rāma's visit to it, they were also relying on Vālmīki's traditional account besides the topographical conditions as seen by them.

4. This study has not taken into account any archaeological evidence in support of my conclusions because the recent excavations at Rāmāyṇa sites such as Ayodhyā, Śṛingaverapura and Bhāradvāja Āshrama have failed to unearth the strata which can be assigned to the age of Rāma. Hence, we are compelled to base our conclusions mainly on the account of Vālmiki who is the earliest writer to throw light on the subject.

5. The study also suggests that Prayāga during the age in question was chiefly a religious and intellectual centre, abounding in groves and belts of forests whose faint survivals can still be traced in the vicinity of modern Allahabad. It was clearly much below the state of attaining the shape of an ordinary urban centre in any way and precisely better assessed had failed to grow even as a compact and continuous settlement such as a large-sized village of the ancient times. Hedged within these groups of forests, there seem to have been in existence Small and scatered settlements on the banks of the rivers Gaṅgā and Yamunā.

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IDENTIFICATION OF MITHILĀ

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The great city of Mithilā, The capital of Videha *janapada* played an important part in the cultural and economic life of pre-Buddhist India. It is significant to note that while the Vedic literature shows repeated acquaintance with the *janapada* of Videha, the capital Mithilā is not mentioned anywhere. However, it does not necessarily prove that the city of Mithilā was not in existence in the Vedic period. According to the epico-Purāṇic tradition[1], this celebrated metropolis was founded by king Mithi, who was the son of Nimi, the founder of the dynasty of Videha. This Mithi, according to the very same tradition[2], was the fourth in descent from Manu, who according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*[3] was the reputed founder of the city of Ayodhyā, or in other words, Mithilā, was built a century after Ayodhyā and this is indirectly confirmed by the evidence of the *Mahābhārata*[4].

About a century ago, Cunningham, the father of Indian archaeology, had tentatively proposed the identification of Mithilā[5] with Janakpur, a small town in the Nepal border. This identification, it is very curious to note, was accepted throughout this century, without any murmur of protest, although all the available evidences clearly go against this identification, and Cunningham too, had he been alive to-day, would have summarily rejected this identification. Let us now try to fix another location for ancient Mithilā, which will be in accordance with what we learn from various sources, most of which were not readily available to Cunningham, when he was writing his *Reports* for the Archaeological Survey.

Let us begin our search for Mithilā from the earliest available source, namely the critical edition of the *Rāmāyaṇa*.

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There is a very instructive *śloka*[6] in the first Book of this work according to which, this city is a day's journey on foot from Vaiśālī. We are told in this crucial verse, from the mouth of Viśvāmitra, that after resting for a day in this place, Rāma well be able to see Janaka, the very next day. So, it is clear from this very important passage, that according to the poet of this Book of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, Mithilā was not far from Vaiśālī, about the identification of which, there is no doubt at present. Elsewhere in same *Kāṇḍa* of the *Rāmāyaṇa*,[7] we are told, that the horsemen of Janaka had covered the distance between Mithilā and Ayodhyā in only three nights, which would have been virtually impossible, had Mithilā been, at present Janakpur, in the Nepal border, some forty miles north of Darbhanga.

However, from the evidence supplied by the *Rāmāyaṇa*, we do not get any idea regarding the exact location of Mithilā. We should remember before proceeding further, that according to a well-known passage of the *Śatapatha Brāhmaṇa*[8], the river Sadānīrā or Gandak was the boundary (*maryādā*) between Kośala and Videha. This Sadānīrā is undoubtedly Gandak, and it is only to be expected that the city of Mithilā should be situated on its eastern bank, and this is actually the case, as we will see afterwards. However before that, we have to see whether the Buddhist texts offer us any help in locating Mithilā.

The *Mahājanaka Jātaka*[9] has a passage, according to which, Mithilā is sixty leagues or *yojana* from Campā, or the present Bhagalpur region. Now, regarding the English equivalent of *yojana* there is no unanimity, and it varies according to authorities, from 2½ miles to 9 miles. But it is implied in this *Jātaka* that the town of Mithilā was situated on a river bank. The *Mahābhārata*[10] also, it should be remembered, mentions Mithilā is connexion with the Sadanīrā, and according to the poet of the Sabhāparvan, the two Pāndavas, Bhīma and Arjuna, accompanied by Vāsudeva, went to Rājagṛha *via*

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Mithilā.[11] This also indirectly goes against Cunningham's location of this city at Janakpur.

However, we are still moving in the darkness. The Vedic, epic and even Buddhist texts do not finally solve the problem. But there were at least two travellers, one belonging to the post-Gupta period, and another to the early Muslim period, who have given us the final answer. We are referring to Yuan Chwang, who visited India, in the first half of the seventh Century A.D., and Jinaprabha, the Jain savant, who visited Mithilā in the early 14th century A D., being a contemporary of Muhammad Bin Tughluq. We have to first consider his statement, as he is practically the only Indian, who has left an account of this city.

Now, in Jinaprabha's time, quite expectedly, Mithilā was no longer known by its original name. According to him it was, in his time known as Jagai,[12] but much more important, is his information that this city is washed by the rivers Gaṇḍakī and Bāṇagaṅgā. He has also referred to the Pātālaliṅga and Sākallakuṇḍa of this place. He has also identified Mithilā *janapada* with Tīrahuttideśa (Tirhut). Another place, called Kaṇaipura, according to him, was situated near the site of Mithilā.

However, even with the help of the information, supplied by Jinaprabha, it would have been difficult to pinpoint the exact location of Mithilā. But here the celebrated Yuan Chwang comes to our rescue. This Chinese pilgrim in his account refers to an old city near Vaiśālī and here we are quoting in full the relevant passage,[13] because of its unique importance-"Nearly 200 li to the north-west of the city of Vesālī, was an old city which had long been a waste with very few inhabitants. In it was a tope where the Buddha had related to a great number of Pusas, Devas and men, his former existence here, as a universal sovereign by name Mahādeva, who had given up his kingdom to become a Bhikshu".

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It is amazing that Cunningham,[14] who had first noticed this passage, entirely missed its significance. The Mahādeva of this passage was corrected to Makhādeva by Watters,[15] but he too missed by a whisker, its correct significance. Cunningham himself would have solved the mystery, had he realized that the city, associated with Makhādeva, is no other than Mithilā. We are referring to the well-known *Makhādeva Jātaka*,[16] where we have the story, quoted by Yuan Chwang, and the hero of which was the universal sovereign or the Cakravartī monarch Makhādeva Janaka. This passage of Yuan Chwang therefore solves for good the problem of the present location of Mithilā.

Now, 200 li of Yuan Chwang, roughly corresponds to 30 miles, or more correctly 33 miles. Exactly at the spot, noted by the Chinese pilgrim, there is the mound now known as KESARIYA, which is just 30 miles to the north-north-west of Vaiśālī.[17] Here Cunningham also came across the Buddhist Stūpa, mentioned by the Chinese pilgrim and that archaeologist himself notes[18] that the *stūpa* was probably built after the second century A.D., "upon the ruined mass of a much older and much larger *stūpa*". We should further take special note of the statement of our Chinese pilgrim, who emphatically says that the city "has long been a waste with very few inhabitants". This shows that long before Yuan Chwang's time, probably by the second century A.D., the city of Mithilā gradually met the fate of cities like Virātanagara, Kauśāmbī, Hastināpura, Śrāvastī, Vaiśālī etc. The description of the ruins near Kesariya by Cunningham also indicates that it was a town of considerable size in ancient days. However archaeological excavations will shed more light on this subject. But the arguments, given above, fully show that Kesariya represents the ancient city of Mithila.

During the days of the Buddha and Mahāvīra, even the citizens of Vaiśālī, were known as Videhans. The mother of Ajātaśatru and also Mahāvīra, who were daughters of a spell king of Vaiśālī, are called Vaidehī in the Buddhist, Jain and

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even Brāhmanical Sanskrit texts.[19] Even Lord Mahāvīra, originally a resident of a suburb of Vaiśālī, was called by such names as Videhadinna, Videhajacca etc, in the original Jain canon.[20] This would not have been possible, had Vaiśālī been not near the famous Mithilā. In the days of Daśaratha and Rāma, however, Vaiśālī was an independent kingdom and town, and this is also supported by the Purāṇic evidence.[21]

Historically, the last person connected with the city of Mithilā, was the Jain rebel (*ninhava*) Āsamitta,[22] who lived in this city 220 years after Lord Mahāvīra, or in other words, in the 3rd century B C.

NOTES

1. See *Bhag*. IX· 13.13; *Brahmāṇda*, II. 3.64.6.
2. See Chatterjee, A.K., *Political History of pre-Buddhist India*, Calcutta, 1980, p. 97.
3. Cr. ed. I. 5.6.
4. See Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, p. 79.
5. *C. A. S. R.*, XVI, p. 34; see also *A. G. I.* (ed. S. N. Majumdar), pp. 510, 718.
6. *Rām*, I. 46.19.
7. *Ibid.*, I. 67. 1.
8. I. 4.1.17.
9. Trans, Cowell, VI, p. 20.
10. II. 18. 27f.
11. *Loc. cit.*
12. Ed Jinavijaya, Santiniketan, 1934, p. 32.
13. Ed. Watters, *Yuan Chwang* etc., II, p. 72.
14 *C. A. S. R.*, I. p. 66.
15. Watters, *Loc. cit.*
16. See Cowell, *op. cit.*, I, No. 9, pp. 30-32.
17. See Cunningham, *C. A. S. R.*, I, pp. 64ff.
18. *Loc. cit.*
19. Cf. the epithet *Vaidehīputra* given to Udayana in Bhāsa's *Svapnavāsavadattā*, Act VI.
20. See *Prakrit Proper Names*, II, p. 576.
21. See Chatterjee, *op. cit.*, pp. 125 ff.
22. See Chatterjee, *A Comprehensive Hist. of Jainism*, Calcutta, 1978, p. 95.

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रामायणकालीन विशाला एवं मिथिला की मूल भूमि की पहचान

रामपुकार सिंह, चेचर वैशाली

अभी तक भारत एवं विदेश के अधिकांश विद्वान वर्तमान बुद्धकालीन वैशाली को ही रामायण में वर्णित विशाला पुरी की मूल भूमि मान रहे हैं। लेकिन वस्तुस्थिति ऐसी नहीं है। वर्तमान चेचर ग्राम समूह जो गंगा नदी के उत्तरी तट पर स्थित है, 'विशाला' नगरी की प्राचीन भूमि है।

ठीक इसी तरह विदेह जनपद के मिथिला नगर के सम्बन्ध में भी भ्रान्ति बनी हुई है। अभी तक सामान्य लोग यही विश्वास कर रहे हैं कि नेपाल राज्य के अन्तर्गत जनकपुर अथवा सितामढ़ी ही मिथिला नगरी की मूल भूमि थी। लेकिन वास्तव में यह स्थल कल्पित है।

वाल्मीकि कृत रामायण में विशाला एवं मिथिला नगर का वर्णन आया है। प्रसंग उस अवसर का है, जब मुनिवर विश्वामित्र जी अयोध्या के राजा दशरथ से उनके पुत्र श्री राम, लक्ष्मण को माँग कर, गंगा के दक्षिण दिशा में स्थित सिद्धाश्रम में अपने यज्ञ की रक्षा हेतु लाये थे। यज्ञ सम्पन्न होने के पश्चात् विश्वामित्र जी पुनः सिद्धाश्रम से लेकर इन्हें मिथिला गये थे। विश्वामित्र जी के साथ श्री राम, लक्ष्मण की यह पदयात्रा अयोध्या से मिथिला तक २६ दिनों की होती है। २६ दिनों के इस यात्रा कर्म में सिद्धाश्रम में ७ दिनों तक, तथा मिथिला में ११ दिनों तक ये ठहरते हैं, शेष ८ दिनों तक ये पदयात्रा करते हैं, तथा मार्ग में ही विश्राम करते हुए आगे की यात्रा प्रारम्भ करते हैं।

इस यात्रा क्रम में यह ध्यान देने की बात है कि सर्वत्र मार्ग में आनेवाले स्थलों, नगरों, नदियों एवं पहाड़ों आदि के सम्बन्ध में श्री राम मुनिवर से उन सबों का प्राचीन इतिहास बताने का आग्रह करते हैं, एवं मुनिवर विश्वामित्र जी उन सबों के निर्माण के प्राचीन इतिहास का विस्तार से वर्णन करते हुए यात्रा करते हैं।

इस पदयात्रा के समय भी रामादि मात्र १४ वर्ष के थे (लगभग) अतः २ से ३ योजन दूरी तक चल कर विश्राम करते थे। यह स्वाभाविक भी लगता है। इस तथ्य का प्रमाण वालमीकि कृत रामायण के प्रथम दिन के यात्रा वृत्तान्त से ही हमें ज्ञात होता है। २६ दिनों तक का यह यात्रा वृत्तान्त संयोग से वालमीक कृत रामायण में बाल काण्ड के सर्ग २० से ७७ तक दैनन्दनी के रूप में अंकित है।

सिद्धाश्रम में यज्ञ सम्पन्न होने के बाद श्री विश्वामित्र जी श्री राम, लक्ष्मण को साथ लेकर मिथिला के लिये प्रस्थान करते हैं तथा मार्ग में सन्ध्या समय शोणभद्र के तट पर रात्रि में विश्राम करते हैं।

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शोणभद्र तट से अगले दिन प्रातःकाल पार होकर विश्वामित्र आदि आधे दिन में ही गङ्गा नदी के दक्षिण तट पर पहुँचते हैं और विश्राम करते हैं।

गङ्गा के दक्षिण तट से प्रातःकाल नाव द्वारा पार गङ्गा के उत्तर तट स्थित विशाला नगरी में पहुँचते हैं, एवं यहाँ के तत्कालीन राजा सुमति द्वारा सत्कार पाकर एक रात यहीं विशाला में ठहरते है।

उतरं तीरमा साद्य सम्पूज्यर्षिगणं ततः।
गङ्गाकुले निविष्टास्ते विशाला दद्रशुपुरीम ॥ ६ ॥ सर्ग

अगले दिन के कार्यक्रम के सम्बन्ध में मुनिवर विश्वामित्र जी श्री राम को बताते हैं कि—

ई हाद्य रजनीमेंका सुखं स्वपस्यामहे वयम्।
श्वः प्रभति नरश्रेष्ठ जनकं द्रष्ठु मर्हसि ॥ १९ ॥ सर्ग

नरश्रेष्ठ राम आज एक रात हमलोग यहीं सुख पुर्वक शयन करेंगे। फिर कल प्रातःकाल तुम मिथिला में राजा जनक का दर्शन करोगे ॥ २०।४७।१९ ॥

अगले प्रातःकाल विशाला से प्रस्थान करके मुनि सहित श्री राम मिथिलापुरी के एक उपवन में पहुँच जाते हैं। वहाँ के एक सूने आश्रम के विषय में पूछने पर विश्वामित्र जी ने उनसे अहल्या का श्रापग्रस्त होने की कथा सुनायी। श्री राम के द्वारा अहल्या का उद्धार हुआ। इसके तत्काल ही लक्षमण सहित श्री राम विश्वामित्र जी को आगे करके गौतम के आश्रम से इशान कोण चलकर मिथिला नरेश के यज्ञ मण्डप में पहुँच जाते हैं, तथा श्री राजा जनक उनके आगमन का समाचार पाकर स्वयं आते हैं और उनका सत्कार करते हैं।

उपर्युक्त विवरण से यह स्पष्ट विदित होता है कि रामायण में वर्णित विशाला नगरी गङ्गा नदी के उत्तरी तट पर ही निश्चित रूप से स्थित थी। अतः महर्षि वाल्मीकि कृत रामायण में उल्लखित भौगोलिक स्थिति दिशा, दूरी के आधार पर विशाला नगरी को गङ्गा के उत्तरी तट पर ही स्थित रहना चाहिये।

चेचर ग्राम समूह में लगभग २४ ग्राम हैं जो लगभग ८ मील की लम्बाई में गङ्गा के किनारे पूरब से पश्चिम की ओर स्थित है। इन ग्राम समूहों में नव पाषाण काल से लेकर आधुनिक काल तक के पुरावशेष क्रमबद्ध रूप से यहाँ प्राप्त हुआ है।

ताम्रश्य कालीन अवशेष भी यहाँ मिलें हैं। देश तथा विदेश के अनेक प्रमुख पुराविदों ने इसे आकर देखा है। भारतीय पुरातत्त्व सर्वेक्षण विभाग ने इसका परि-क्षण के तौर पर उत्खनन् भी कराया है। यद्यपि उत्खनन् का कार्य अन्तिम सतह तक नहीं हुआ है फिर भी नवपाषाण काल से लेकर पालकाल तक के अवशेष यहाँ क्रमबद्ध रूप से उत्खनन् में प्राप्त हुए हैं। देश के एक प्रसिद्ध विद्वान् डॉ० बि० पी० सिन्हा ने स्वयं आकर इस स्थल का निरीक्षण किया है एवं स्पष्ट टिप्पणी लिखा है कि नवपाषाण काल से लेकर शुंग कुषाण काल तक की संस्कृतियाँ इस भूमि के अन्तर्गत संजोई हुई हैं।

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विद्वानों का कहना है कि श्री राम, लक्ष्मण विश्वामित्र के साथ वर्तमान फतुहा एवं पटना सीटी के बीच कहीं से गङ्गा पार करके उत्तरी तट पर पहुँचे थे। चेचर ग्राम समूह ठीक पाटलीपुत्र के उत्तर दिशा में स्थित है। हानीपुर से महनार तक पुरातात्विक सर्वेक्षण करने से यह प्रमाणित होता है कि चेचर ग्राम समूह के अतिरिक्त कहीं अन्यत्र इतना प्राचीन काल के अवशेष और कहीं नहीं है।

अतः उपर्युक्त तथ्यों के आधार पर यह प्रमाणित होता है कि वर्त्तमान काल का चेचर ग्राम समूह ही रामायण काल की विशालापुरी है।

अब प्रश्न यह उठता है कि विदेह जनपद की राजधानी मिथिला नगरी कहाँ है। अभी तक सामान्य लोग नेपाल स्थित जनकपुर या सितामढ़ी को ही मिथिला की मूल भूमि मान रहे हैं।

लेकिन आप स्वयं देखें कि महर्षि स्पष्ट कहते हैं कि मिथिला नगरी विशाला के समीप में ही है। रात में विशाला में विश्वामित्र जी स्पष्ट निर्देश देते हुए बताते हैं कि वत्स राम कल प्रातःकाल ही तुम्हें राजा जनक से भेंट होगी। इहाद्य श्वः प्रभाते।

मुझे ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि मिथिला नगरी महर्षि वाल्मीकि के कथनानुसार विशाला पुरी से मात्र २ से ३ घण्टा की यात्रा की परिधि में कहीं होगी। क्योंकि विशाला से मिथिला में मात्र आधा दिन में ही मिथिला पहुँचे जाने का स्पष्ट संकेत हैं।

अब अगर हम चेचर ग्राम समूह को विशाला मान रहे हैं तो निश्चय ही चेचर ग्राम समूह के समीप में कहीं न कहीं मिथिला की मूल भूमि का भग्नावशेष होगा।

चेचर ग्राम समूह से ठीक उत्तर पूर्व कोण पर (९ से १० मील की दूरी) नारी, महन्ती तथा सिधाड़ा ग्राम है जो वर-अइला क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत है। इन ग्राम समूहों में निचली भूमी में नवपाषाणकाल से लेकर बुद्धकाल तक के पुरावशेष प्रचुर मात्रा में कई मील के क्षेत्रों में मिले हैं, जो चेचर ग्राम समूह से प्राप्त पुरावशेषों के सादृश्य ही हैं। अतः ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि प्राचीन मिथिला नगरी का अवशेष इसी वर-अइता क्षेत्र के अन्तर्गत भूमिगत स्थिति में है। वरैला क्षेत्र के भौगोलिक स्थिति, दिशा, दूरी एवं पुरावशेषों के आधार पर हम यह कहने में अपने को समर्थ पाते हैं कि मिथिला नगरी का प्राचीन क्षेत्र यहीं है। तुलसी कृत रामायण भी इस तथ्य का समर्थन करता है।

चले राम लछिमन मुनि संगा। गए जहाँ जग पावनि गंगा।
गाधिसूनु सब कथा सुनाई। जेहि प्रकार सुरसरी महि आई॥
तब प्रभु रिषिन्ह समेत नहाये। विविध दान महिदेवही पाये॥
हरषि चले मुनि बृन्द सहाया। वेगि विदेह नगर नियराया॥

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SCULPTURAL REPRESENTATIONS OF SOME RĀMĀYAṆA EPISODES—REGIONAL VARIATIONS

Krishan Deva

Rāma's story, first narrated in *Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa* and subsequently repeated and garnished in numerous regional versions in India and many countries of South-east Asia, has been an eternal source of inspiration to the poets and artists through the ages. All the performing arts together with poetry and drama and sculpture and painting have drawn liberally picked up pearls from the ocean which is Rāma's legend.

In this essay we shall highlight the regional variations in the plastic representations of some selected episodes from Rāma's story with a view mainly to demonstrate the divergences in the art idioms of various regions and their preferences of Rāmāyaṇa episodes.

The earliest sculptural representation of a Rāmāyaṇa scene comes from the Ikshvāku art center of Nagarjunakonda on the krishna river in Andhra Pradesh, datable to c. 3rd century A.D. A relief[1] here depicts Hanuman carrying on his back Rāma and Lakshmaṇa followed by an attendant. The scene represents the miraculous transport by Hanumān of the two brothers from Pampāsara to Rishyamūka hill, where Sugriva, pursued by his elder brother, the monkey chief Vāli, had taken refuge. Compared to the colossal dimensions of Hanumān the other figures accommodated within the loop of Hanumān's upturned tail are quite puny. Rāma, the leading figure, is easily recognizable by his enormous bow and the *Channavira* ornament on his person.

P. Banerjee has published a crowded panel of similar date from Nagarjunakonda in his book *Rāma in Indian Literature Art and Thought* (Delhi 1986), Vol. II, Fig. 59, depicting Rāma and Sītā in the ascetic garb taking leave of king Daśaratha who is enthroned in his court and is shown visibly

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grieving. This may represent an episode from the Daśaratha Jātaka. P. Banerjee's identification of another Nagarjunakonda relief (his Fig. 77) as the meeting of Rāma and Bharata at Chitrakūṭa seems doubtful, since the background shows a rich ornate house rather than a forest cottage where the two brothers had met. This scene is best portrayed at Aphsad[3] near Nalanda which has yielded a regular sequence of stucco reliefs of c. 7th century from the crossing of the Gaṅgā at Shringaverapura to the meeting of Bharata with Rāma at Chitrakuta, as narrated in the *Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa*. The Aphsad Stucco depicts a highly emotional scene of Bharata bending down to touch Rāma's feet and Rāma folding Bharata to his chest in a warm embrace. Rāma, wearing the usual *channavīra* with the *tuṇīra* sticking out from behind his shoulder is followed by Lakshmaṇa while Sītā shown behind Bharata, looks on the poignant scene. This episode is also depicted in a stone panel on the plinth of the Nagesvarasvami Temple at Kumbakonam of the 10th century (P. Banerjee, loc. cit., Fig. 79). Rāma (attended by standing Lakshmaṇa) and Sītā are depicted in this panel as seated on a high pedestal while Bharata bends down on the ground to touch Rāma's feet. This is a typical specimen of early Cole art, imbued with dignity and eloquent brevity.

The episode of redemption by Rāma of Ahalyā who was cursed by her husband sage Gautama to be reduced to an invisible phantom for falling a willing victim to Indra's lust is quite favourite in North India. The most graphic representation of it comes from a panel in the Gupta temple at Deogadh (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit*, Fig. 40) where the scene is laid in a forest hermitage, marked by the august presence of sage Gautama. Rāma is seen carrying bow and wearing matted locks and *channavīra* with Lakshamaṇa standing behind in attendance. Ahalyā, who is relieved of the curse and assumes her original form by the sacred touch of Rāma, bows down, flower in hand at the feet of Rāma. The same episode is summarily treated in a contemporary (Gupta) terracotta panel from

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Srāvasti and in a slightly later panel in Stone Temple 2 at Nālandā where Rāma is shown standing, while Ahalyā in renewed human form bows down in supplication (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit.*, Figs. 41–42).

The episode of Sūrpanakhā's amours being rejected by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa in the Daṇḍakāraṇya is most convincingly shown in a stone relief from Nachna[4] were Sūrpanakhā suddenly appears as an angelic beauty and proposes amours. Rāma, who is seated at ease with Sīta, plays with the credulous demoness and with tactful humour passes her on to his younger brother Lakshmṇa who would brook no nonsense and walks away from the spot in contemptuous disgust. Deogadh represents the final act of the same episode (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit*, Fig. 98 a) showing Lakshmaṇa violently catching hole of Sūrpankhā by her locks and wielding the sword to maim her. Both reliefs pertain to the Gupta art of Central India but the panel from Nachna is earlier and daintier than the one from Deogadh.

The duel of Vāli and Sugrīva and the numerous episodes connected therewith are the favourite themes of sculptors of all ages and regions from the 5th through the 13th century. The scene of *Sapta-tāla-vedha* by Rāma as a test of his superhuman prowess from Prambanam in Java (c. 9th century) is indeed more convincing than that of Amritesvara temple (A. D. 1190) at Amritapur, Karnataka, where the depiction is highly mannered and abstract (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit.*, Figs. 128–129). The representation of actual duel between the two brothers at Ellora Cave 16 (8th century-Rāshṭrakūṭa art) is indeed much more dynamic than those of Paunar in Maharashtra and Nachna in Central India of the Gupta period (P. Banerjee, loc. cit., Figs. 130–134). The Ellora panel includes at its base the poignant scene of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa approaching the mortally wounded Vāli whose fall is being grieved over by his devoted wife Tārā.

Sītā imprisoned at the *Aśoka-Vāṭikā* in Laṅkā is an oft repeated episode in Indian sculpture as well as painting. Of

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the plastic representations of this scene the Gupta terracotta panel from Bhind in Madhya Pradesh showing Sītā pining while seated under a tree with its bough bent in empathy is a marvel of plastic brevity, and much more gripping than the stone panel of the Kalpanarayana temple at Bhatkal, Karnataka (c. 16th century) which shows the synoptic scenes of Hanumāna first scouting from the tree top and subsequently appearing before Sītā as Rāma's devout messenger (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit*, Figs. 156 and 162).

I had identified the Gupta panel from Nachna[5] showing Hanumān bound and dragged by Meghanāda and his attendants to the presence of Rāvaṇa, proudly seated in a pavilion. The same episode is summarily treated in the Varahi temple at Chaurasi, Distt. Puri in a 10th century panel of Kalinga art (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit*, Fig. 169) with its impact much less effective than that of Nachna panel.

The selected episodes discussed here indicate the great hold the Rāma legend exercised on the popular mind through the ages in India as well as Southeast Asia and highlight the regional art idioms which variously delineated them. Incidentally they also throw a tangential light on the literary sources of their inspiration. While *Vālmīkī Rāmāyaṇa* was certainly the primary literary source for the North Indian depictions like the Gupta stone panels from Nachna and Deogadh in Central India and the Aphsad stuccos from Eastern India which largely dwelt on the episodes from the *Ayodhyā*–and *Kishkindhā-Kāndas*, the 7th–8th century depictions from Pattadkal in Karnataka (those at the Papanath temple are labelled in contemporary script) also draw from the same source but love to portray scenes from the *Bālakāṇḍa* as also from the *Kishkindhā*-and subsequent *Kāṇḍas*. The later Karnataka temples drew from Valmiki, as garnished and coloured by later regional varsions like the *Hanuman Nāṭaka*, a Sanskrit drama of c. 10th century, which is suggested by the inclusion of a huge serpent in the *Sapta-tālā-vedha* scene from the 12th century Amritesvara

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temple at Amritapur (P. Banerjee, *loc. cit*, Fig. 129) discussed above.

Reference

1. P.K. Agrawala, "Identification of Hanumān and Rāma on a Nagarjunakonda Relief", *Journal of Oriental Institute*, Baroda, Vol. XXX (1980–81) pp. 105–111.

2. Both reliefs were identified earlier by Longhurst as illustrating parallel episodes from the Dasaratha Jataka (vide A. H. Longhurst, *The Buddhist Antiquities of Nagarjunakonda Madras Presidency* (ASI Memoir No. 54), Delhi 1938, Pl. XLV (a), pp. 49–50

3. B.P. Sinha, Representation of Ramayanic Scenes in an Old Temple at Aphsad" *Journal of Bihar Research Society* Vol. LIV (1968) pp. 216–218.

4. Krishna Deva, "Gupta Ramayana Panels from Nachna". *Chhavi* 2 (Varanasi 1981) pp. 10–12.

5. *Ibid*. pp. 13–14.

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AHALYA IN LITERATURE, ART AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Dr. N. R. Banerjee

अहल्या द्रौपदी कुन्ती तारा मन्दोदरी तथा।
पञ्चकन्याः स्मरेन्नित्यं महापातकनाशनम् ॥

The story of Ahalyā narrated by Viswāmitra in the course of the journey of Rāma and Lakshmaṇa from Viśā'ā to Mithilā after the discomfiture of the Rākshasas and the successful performance of sacrificial rites by Visvāmitra is not apparently very relevant to the unfolding of the story of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Yet the episode features prominently in the entire narrative and constitutes one of the early miracles performed by Rāma and pretends the supernatural being that he was to be. A clue seems to lie in the meaning of the name itself. *Halya* means one fit to fault with. *Ahalya*, therefore, should mean faultless, and therefore, by inference a feminine person of matchless beauty and character. Rabindranath Thakur, however, felt that *Ahalyā* meant a land unfit for cultivation. *Ahalyoddhāra*, according to him, would, therefore, mean reclamation of land that was lying unfit for cultivation for a long time and rendering it fit for cultivation. Such an act would consist of clearance of jungle, laying of pathway for access, and tillage of a patch of land, and the introduction or reintroduction of cultivation. According to Tagore, therefore, the story was an allegory or *rūpaka* for a technological-cum-economic event, if not phenomenon.

The story dealing with the Ahalyā episode occurs in almost all the versons of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, though there are a few variations here and there. The story broadly is as follows :

On the way from Viśālā to Mithilā Rāma observed an *āśrama* that was endowed with an abundance of flowering trees, and yet was unoccupied. On asking Visvāmitra about it the latter narrated the story. Formerly the sage Gautama was living here. To serve him during his severe penances Brahmā

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created a woman of matchless beauty and entrusted her to Gautama. The latter took care of her dispassionately and was not moved by any carnal desire in regard to her.[1] Brahma then offered her in marriage to Gautama much to the chagrin of Indra, who had coveted her for himself. Indra was not apparently reconciled and he never gave up his hope of seducing Ahalyā. One night taking advantage of Gautama's absence, or inducing him to leave his *āśrama* temporarily for his ablutions, Indra stealthily entered into the hut of Gautama in the disguise of Gautama and took her to bed.[2] There were different versions of whether Ahalyā had been able to recognise him as Indra on account of the fragrance of his body or wilfully surrendered herself to a paramour.[3] Nevertheless, Gautama returned soon after and surprised Indra as he was trying to escape in the disguise of a cat after the misdeed. He understood what had happened and cursed Indra to be deprived of his virility, and his body to be disfigured by the growth thereon of a thousand *bhagas* as a punishment for adultery.[4] It was later at Brahmā's intercession that his virility was restored and the disfigurement of his body was caused to be made by the growth of a thousand eyes, instead of the genital organs, which gave Indra the epithet of सहस्राक्ष Here we have the suggestion of the development of a debilitating and disfiguring disease caused by adultery, and a positive reference to some kind of transplantation surgery for it was an *aja* or sheep whose testicles came to Indra's rescue.

The justification given by Indra for this heinous act was that Gautama by his penance had threatened the position of the gods, and by making Gautama lose his temper or balance of mind he had served the cause of the gods, so he was not to be found at fault and it behoved them to do everything in their power to restore his potency.

As regards Ahalyā, though she pleaded innocence and the extent of her involvement is not certain, she was cursed to become invisible and live on air and atone for a thousand years

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before she could be restored to view, when Rāma, son of Dasratha would appear on the scene.[5] According to another version she was transformed into a block of stone (पाषाण भूता) which when stepped upon by Rāma, changed into Ahalya.[6]

Ahalya was thereupon reunited with Gautama.

The travellers of the story then moved on to Mithilā.

Let us briefly examine chronologically the different versions of the narrative.

According to *Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa* dated between *circa* 4 cent. B.C. and 2nd century A. D. Ahalyā was indeed able to recognise Indra in the guise of Gautama and was, therefore, a party to the event, but she admitted her fault'.

she was cursed to be
वायुभक्षा निराहारा तप्यन्ती भस्मशायिनी ।
अदृश्या सर्वभूतानामाश्रमेऽस्मिन् निवत्स्यसि ॥

Later Gautama offered prayers for Ahalyā at कोटितीर्थं at her restoration.

An *Ahalyā-sarovara* was excavated to mark the event, and a *Gautamesvara-liṅga* was also set upon the spot. *Raghuvaṁśaṁ* of Kālidāsa, datable to the 4th century A.D., refers to the transformation of Ahalyā into stone, and restoration to her former human shape by the dust of the feet of Rama.

Canto 11, Sloka 34 reads as follows:
प्रत्यपद्यत चिराय यत्पुनश्चारु गौतमबधूः शिलामयी ।
स्वं वपुः स किल किल्विशच्छिन्नं रामपादरमसामनुग्रहः ॥

Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa is attributed by A.N. Jani to a post-Bhāgavata date (*circa* 10th century A.D., and is dated to the 13th century as an apocryphal of the *Brahmāṇḍa Purāna*. He also mentions the older view of Ekanātha, composer of the 16th century Marathi work on *Bhāvārtha Rāmāyaṇa*, that it was a compilation of excerpts from older writings. *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa* recounts the story of the marriage of Gautama with

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Ahalyā celebrated by Brahmā having aroused the jealousy of Indra, and that it led him to the committing of an improper act with *Ahalyā*. As a result Gautama cursed them in the following words:

योनिलम्पट दुष्टात्मन सहस्र भगवान भव ।
दुष्टे त्वं तिष्ठ दुर्वृत्ते शिलामयाश्रमे मम ॥

Kamba Rāmāyaṇa,[8] attributed to the 9th-13th centuries, is a Tamila work by Kamban. According to it the group of travellers spent a night in a garden on the bank of the *Soṇa*. The next day they arrived at the outskirts of the walled city of Mithilā and saw a barren and abandoned area, and a large block of rock. Visvāmitra explained it was the *āśrama* of Gautama, and the block of stone was Ahalyā. As soon as Rāma set his foot on the stone it changed into the shape of a comely woman. Ahalyā had come alive. The curse on Indra was the same as in Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa, and it was modified in the usual manner at the request of all the gods and Brahmā.

The *Rāmayaṇa* of Krittivasa, composed in Bengali sometime before A.D. 1480 pictures Indra as a pupil of Gautama, who cheated Ahalyā in the disguise of Gautama. The rest of the story is similar to the Vālmikī Rāmāyaṇa account.

Bhanubhakta's *Rāmāyaṇa* in Nepali was written between 1841 and 1853. It shows that Gautama's *āśrama* was on the bank of the Gaṅgā on the route from Siddhāśrama to Mithilā. The rest of the story is alike.

Tulsidāsa's *Rāmāyaṇa* (Rāmacaritamanasa) composed between A.D. 1574 and 1576 simply explains that the block of stone lying on the way in an abandoned *āśrama* was the stony form of Ahalyā so transformed by the curse of her husband Gautama. Ahalyā regained her physical form on coming into contact with the dust of the feet of Rāma.

Thus it is seen that the story of the reclamation and restoration of *Ahalyā* is almost the same in all the accounts but for minor differences.

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Tagore's interpretation of the story as an allegory or *rūpaka* of the phenomenon of the fertilization and cultivation of an area that had lain barren seems to be borne out not merely by the primary evidence of the coming together of the members of the dramatis personae but also by the archaeological evidence gathered so far.

The coming together of *Indra*, god of rain and thunder, and *Ahalyā* would represent the first essential step in the process of the fertilisation of virgin or barren land. The appearance on the scene of Rāma for removal of stones and gravel and clearance of weeds and bushes of a near forested area would represent the second stage.

As we shall shortly observe Rāma goes thereafter on to the court of Janaka. Janaka himself was styled as the Rājarshi Janaka *Sīradhvaja*, that is the saga king who had the plough share for his emblem, and himself was used to plying the plough occasionally. In fact, while he was once ploughing a plot of land for the purpose of clearing it of weeds, gravel and stones and making it suitable for the performance of a sacrifice to be performed for progeny he found an infant girl lying in the furrow made by his plough. In other words his efforts and labours had borne fruit. The new found baby was aptly named *Sītā* after the furrow.

The subsequent marriage of Rāma and *Sītā* also points to the coming together of the breaker of fresh grounds, the wielder of the bow and arrow and scourge of wild animals and marauding tribal people and the tenderer and nourisher of crops, namely, the furrow caused by the plough or *Sītā*.

Now to turn to the internal evidence of *Vālmikī-Rāmāyaṇa*, which provided the kernel of the story of the exploits and life of Rāma, and upon which all later versions with all other variations are based. Rāma in the course of his journey in the company of Viśvāmitra covered an extensive territory from Ayodhyā to Mithilā passing through villages

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and towns crossing rivers, forests and gardens. The entire journey took 14 days to complete.[9]

At the end of the 1st day's march the travellers reached the south bank of the Sarayū and spent the night there.

On the *second day* they came to the confluence of the Saryū and *Gaṅgā* in Aṅgadesa, and spent the night in the former hermitage of the formless god of love.

On the *3rd day* they crossed the Gaṅgā by boat and reached a forest, where lay the ruins of the twin cities of Malada and Kārusha, where dwelt the fierce demoness Tādakā, who by her destructive action was spelling disaster for the region. At Viśvāmitra's instruction Tāḍakā was killed by Rāma and Lakshmaṇa on this day.

on the *4th day* they reached the *āśrama* of Visvāmitra before nightfall.

For the next six days, i.e. from the 5th day to the 10th day, the two brothers kept vigil and held the Rākshasas at bay, throwing Mārich into the sea and killing Subāhu to enable Viśvāmitra to perform his sacrifice in peace.

On the 11th day, Viśvāmitra informed the two princes of impending *dhanush-yajña* of Janaka at Mithilā and invited them to accompany him to the court of Janaka to witness the great event, and the party left ***northwards*** for Mithilā (***from near Chirand to near Pataliputra***). Towards evening they reached the bank of the *Śoṇā,*

Here Viśvāmitra tells Rāma and Lakshmaṇa of the founding of the cities of ***Kauśāmbi, Mahodaya*** (Kanauj), ***Dharmaraṇya*** and ***Girivraja*** by the sons of ***Kuśa***, and of the founding of ***Kāmpilyā*** by Brahmadat.a, the son-in-law of Kusanābha, the second son of Kuśa and founder of ***Mahodaya.***

They then spent the night of the 11th day on the bank of the *Śoṇā nadī.*

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On the morning of the 12th day they started moving towards the *Jāhnavi* or Ganga again, and reached the banks of the mighty river by mid-day. They spent the night on the river bank.

On the morning of the 13th day a boat was brought up by the sages living in the area. The party then crossed the Gaṅgā over to the north bank and towards evening reached Viṣālā (which has been identified with Vaiśāli), which was founded by Ikshvāku's son named Viśālā in the ancient past. The ruling King Sumati was 9th in descent from the founder. He received the travellers with appropriate courtesies and they spent the night in the comfort of royal hospitality.

The next day, the 14th, they resumed their journey towards Mithilā. On the way they saw an abandoned *tapovana*, which was stated to be the hermitage of Gautama, and the episode of the restoration of Ahalyā took place there. They reached the outskirts of the city of Mithilā by the evening. Thus Mithilā was a day's march away from Vaiśalī.

It is interesting to record that Śatānanda, the chief priest at the court of Janaka, was extremely happy to learn of the reclamation of his mother Ahalyā at the feet of Rāma, or of the accout of the resumption of agricultural operations on a hitherto barren land.

We find that it took the footloose travellers on foot to reach about 8 or 9 days to traverse to distance from Ayodhya to Mithila, excluding the 6 day's sojourn at Siddhasrama, i.e. the *āsrama* of Viśvāmitra. It is not too unrealistic a period and the geographical account about the succession of rivers and towns appear to be fairly accurate.

Though Mithila had not been identified satisfactorily so far, a plausible identification has now been offered by Dr. Asim Kumar Chatterji in his paper on the subject. Only the archaeologist's spade will help establish the truth or otherwise of this

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identification, and any effort in this direction is well worth the endeavour.

However, the work done hitherto by Prof. Lal on the sites associated with the *Rāmāyaṇa* have shown a topsy-turvy sequence, indicating that the incidents af the *Rāmāyaṇa* were later than those of the *Mahābhārata* and that the date of the *Rāmāyaṇa* on the present showing is indicated to be somewhere around 700 B.C. About the priority of the *Mahābhārata* no less a scholar than Prof H.C. Roychowdhury had expressed well-documented views in his work on ***Studies in Indian Antiquities*** published about 45 years ago in 1943.

It is well known that though iron as a metal had been produced by man in north India first in the days of the Painted Grey ware, it was only in the succeeding period of the N.B.P. Ware that iron began to be used extensively and it became possible to fell trees and clear forest with more plentifully produced objects of iron and to bring larger areas under cultivation to accommodate and support growing populations. The archaeological evidence of iron seems to suggest or suppport the literary evidence as recorded in the *Rāmāyaṇa*. For instance, when Deśaratha died, his body was kept immersed in oil in a large vessel of iron. The bow of Śiva, which Rāma broke in the court of Janaka had been kept in large box made of iron. When Viśvāmitra was narrating the account of the birth of Kārttikeya, he stated that the metals iron, copper and lead were produced from Śiva's seed cast by the fire god into the body of Gaṅgā, pointing to a period when these metals began to be used on a larger scale than hitherto.

In this connection the earlier existence of Hastināpura and the subsequent founding of Kauśāmbi are already established by the *purāṇas* and by archaeology. The reference to several other cities including Viśālā and Mithila help indicate their antiquity before the times of the Rāmāyaṇa.

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Regardless of where the truth may ultimately be in regard to the relative sequence of the *Mahābhārata* and the *Rāmāyaṇa* and what dates come to be finally accepted for them, the singular episode of Ahalyā appears to be an allegory for the introduction of agriculture in forested or otherwise gravelly and rocky areas. This was possible, as Prof. Lal also pointed out in his Key-note address, as a result of the extensive use of iron tools, which came into vogue about this time.

By the modern methods of dating, the emergence of incipient iron in north India cannot be placed very much earlier than *circa* 1000 B.C., the most plausible lower level of the chronology of the Painted Grey Ware, and the full-fledged developement of iron as a utility metal connected with large scale undertaking of agricultural operation in north India cannot be placed very much earlier than *circa* 600 B.C. It may be born in mind in this context that the working of iron had developed sufficiently by the time of Rama (*circa* 700 B.C.) to enable the craftsmen to produce a large vessel to contain the dead body of Daśaratha and a wheeled box large and strong enough to contain the bow of Śiva in Janaka's court. This development in north India could have taken place between *circa* 1000 B.C. at the earliest and 200 B.C. at the latest. If the literary evidence is to be believed, the technological development involved and, therefore, the chronology of the two epics, on the present showing, lies between these two dates, provided also, if the consistent results of all the carbon-14 analyses and thermoluminiscence studies are to be held as correct.

Referenee

1. Valmiki Rāmāyana, Uttarakanda, 30, 29.; *Vishṇu Purāna*, 4,29, *Matrya Purāṇa*, 50
2. *Brahma Purāṇa*, 87, 122, *Mahābhārata*, udyogaparvan;, Valmiki *Rāmāyaṇa*, Uttarakanda, 30, 32; *Skanda Purāna*, 1, 2.52
3. *Valmiki Rāmāyana*, Balakāḍa, 48, 29.
4. *Brahma Purāṇa*, 87; *Padma Purāṇa*, 50; *Gaṇesa Purāṇa*, 1, 31.

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5. *Valmiki Rāmāyana*, Balakanda, 48, 48, Uttarakanda, 30, *Gaṇeśa Purāṇ*, 1, 31.

6. *Nrisimha Purāṇa*; *Vahni Purāṇa*. See pages 37 and 38 of K.R. Srinivasa Iyengar, The Asian Variation in Ramayna, Sahitya Akademi, 1983.

7. *Adhyatma Ramayana.*;

8. N.B. Rajagopalan, *Kamba-Ramayana*, Bihar Rashtrabhasha Parishad, Patna, 1963, dated between the 9th and 12th centuries, pp. 57–67.

9. Hemachandra Bhattacharya, Bengali translation of *Valmīki-Rāmāyaṇa* giving detailed accounts of the travels of Rāma and Lakshmana in the company of Visvamitra from Ayodhya to Mithila, with the descriptions of all the intervoven stories narrated by Visvamitra.

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ŚRĪ RĀMA IN ANCIENT LITERATURE AND ART

Prof. K.D. Bajpai, Sagar

Recently attention of scholars has been drawn towards the problem of historicity of Rāma and his portrayal in ancient art. The seminar organised at Patna is a very timely one in view of the fact that the subject is being discussed in the country and abroad on the basis of literary and archaeological source-material.

The story of Rāma (*Rāmopākhyāna*) seems to have gained popularity during the later Vedic period. The kernel of the story highlighted the victory of righteousness over the evil forces. Rāma, the hero of the epic, was regarded as the embodiment of the ideals of the Vedic (Aryan) culture *par excellence.* He gained victory over Rāvaṇa, the evil force, who opposed the Vedic culture.

To the sage Vālmīki is attributed the first rendering of the popular story of Rāma into the simple *anuṣṭubha* verses. On the basis of the language and the literary form of the original kernel of the epic, it may be surmised that the first versification of the Rāmāyaṇa took place about c. 500 B.C. The lower limit of the extant epic can be assigned to c. 300 A.D., if not a little later, on the basis of the internal evidence. Looking to the great popularity of the Rāmāyaṇa, this long stretch of time cannot be regarded unreasonable. This also holds good in case of the other great epic, the Mahābhārata. The main episodes of both the epics have been elaborated, bearing profuse poetic embellishments. This was but natural in the case of these two epics.

It is not possible for the present author to agree with the view that the Rāmāyaṇa is a myth. Had it been a myth, pure and simple, the story of Rāma could not have survived through

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the ages. It could not then have penetrated deep into the life of the masses throughout the country. Nor could it have made any lasting impact on the cultures of several South-East Asian countries outside India. Rāma's story can be called historical in the same sense as it is applicable to the cases of the Pāṇḍavas and the Kauravas, of Kṛshṇa, of Mahāvīra or of Gautama the Buddha. We do not question the historicity of Mahāvīra, the Buddha, Udayana or Kauṭilya. The existence of Rāma or Kṛshṇa cannot be denied on the ground that no inscriptions or coins of theirs or of their time are definitely known. All proto-history cannot be dubbed as mythology. Otherwise, the very name 'Proto-history' would become a misnomer. This is not only applicable to India but can also hold good in the case of other civilized countries of the past. I uphold the view, based on reliable evidence, that the time of the Bhārata War was about 1400 B.C. and that Rāma flourished about 500 years before the Bhārata War.

The Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, even in its extant enlarged form, provides us with sufficient reliable evidence pertaining to the geography of the long stretch of land between Ayodhyā on the river Sarayū in U.P, and Daṇḍakāraṇya, stretching through the present Bastar district of M.P. The geographical details of the Rāmāyaṇa, when studied along those occurring in the works of Kālidāsa, Varāhamihira, Bāṇabhaṭṭa, Bhavabhūti Rājaśekhara and others, coupled with the available archaeological evidence, lead us to the conclusion that Rāma, after leaving Chitrakūṭa (in the Bānda district of U.P.), took up the south-eastern direction to reach Daṇḍakāraṇya. In the present geographical context, Rāma on his onward journey from Chitrakūṭa passed through the districts of Panna, Satna, Shahdol, Ambikapur, Bilaspur, Raipur and Bastar. In the present Madhya Pradesh he must have crossed the major rivers, the Sone and the Mahānadī to reach the Bastar region. Several present geographical names and relics in the areas, mentioned obove, furnish a clue to their association with the story or Rāma in one form or the other.

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It is interesting to note that the portrayal in stone of Rāma's story is found, probably for the first time, at Nachna in the Panna district of Madhya Pradesh. Several artistic panels of the Gupta period, depicting Rāma's episodes of the forest and his association with the Vānaras led by Sugrīva, have been discovered at Nachna. It seems that a temple of Rāma was constructed at Nachna in the 5th c. A.D. Rāma's earliest cult-image is likely to be traced out at Nachna or nearabout.

Another important centre, not far from Nachna, is Deogarh (district Lalitpur, U.P.). Several stone slabs, representing the story of Rāma, have been obtained at Deogarh. They are assignable to early 6th century A.D , a little after the Nachna panels. These relics indicate that Rāma's story had become quite popular in Central India during the Gupta period.

Besides Nachna and Deogarh, depiction on stone of several episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa have been discovered in Central India at Tripurī (dist. Jabalpur), Khajuraho, Kharod, Shabarīnārāyaṇa, Ratanpur, Palī and Jānjgīr. The last mentioned five sites are located in the Bilaspur district of Madhya Pradesh. At Sirpur in the Raipur district some scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa have been traced. From the Bhind district an interesting terracotta figure showing Sītā, seated under an Asoka tree in a pensive mood, has been discovered. There is a similar stone piece in the Sarnath Museum, which P. Banerji identifies with Sītā. It may be noted that unlike the portrayal of the childhood of Kṛishṇa in ancient and medieval plastic and pictorial Indian art, we find that the sculptors of the Madhya Pradesh region were interested in depicting Rāma's life after his banishment to the forest.

A few other sites are known where the depiction of Rāma's popular story is discernible in plastic art. Mention may be made of Bhītargaon (district Kanpur), Śrāvastī (district Gonda, U.P.), Pravarapura (Vidarbha), Chausā and Aphsad (Bihar), Pahārpur (Bengal) and Kirāḍu (Rajasthan).

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In the South also Rāmāyaṇa scenes were popular at several sites. Mention may be made of Ellora, paṭṭadakal, Halebid and Kumbhakonam. In almost all the schools of Indian painting numerous pictorial representations of the story of Rāma are known.

Rāma's story travelled to other countries, such as Thailand, Cambodia, Java, Sumatra and Bālī through south-eastern Madhya Pradesh and Orissa. The profuse carvings of scenes from the Rāmāyaṇa in the countries, mentioned above, eloquently prove the popularity of Rāma's story outside India. A comparative study of the themes, human ethnic features and also of the decorative patterns found in the plastic art of the Chhattisgarh region of the early medieval period with the cantemporary art of South-East Asia would leave no doubt as to the impact of the Chhattisgarh region on the art of those distant lands.

Rāma took the south-eastern direction in the region of Madhya Pradesh to reach Daṇḍaka forest. He passed through the area of Dakshiṇa Kosala, the name having been given to the region south of the present Satna-Rewa districts. It may be mentioned here that Rāma's mother Kausalyā most probably belonged to this region. To distinguish it from the northern Kosala of the Ikshvākus (with Ayodhyā as its capital), the southern region was called Dakshiṇa Kosala. The route of Rāma was later on followed by Samudragupta in the 4th century A.D. in his south Indian campaign. Had Rāma passed through the south-western part of Madhya Pradesh, some tangible traces of his route would have been found and at least some early art-relics could have been preserved in that region. In taking the south-western route it was necessary for Rāma to cross the river Narmadā. But in the Rāmāyaṇa or in the other early sources, we do not find that Rāma had crossed the river Narmadā while proceeding to the south.

As regards the names 'Daṇḍaka' and 'Laṅkā', there is a strong basis to believe that these and several other geographi-

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cal names originated from the local languages of the Śabaras who inhabited the Vindhyāṭavī and the region further south in Daṇḍakāraṇya. The *āśramas* of sages like Vālmīki, Atri, Agastya and Śarabhaṅga, whose main objective was to propagate Aryan culture in the area of the *Nishādas* and the *Śabaras*, were located in these forest areas.

Rāma in his wanderings reached the southern part of Daṇḍakāraṇya. There is another Chitrakūṭa in the Bastar District, on the banks of the river Indrāvatī. It also claims association with Rāma.

From the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki we learn that several powerful chiefs of the Nishadas, the Śabaras, the Vānaras and the Ṛkshas (all human beings) became friendly with Rāma. They may have realised that they would be safe if they sided with Rāma against the Rākshasas, whose leader Rāvaṇa was a terror to the tribal people of the area and who had later on become Rāma's enemy.

As regards Rāvaṇa and his Laṅkā, the great epic leaves no doubt in our minds that Rāvaṇa was a very powerful monarch of the extensive Daṇḍaka area. He seems to have extended his sway in the north, right up to Amarakaṇṭaka. The name 'Amarakaṇṭaka' seems to suggest that this place was like a thorn to the Amaras (Devas, or the followers of the Aryan culture). The name of Rāvaṇa's dynasty is given as Sālakaṭaṅkaṭa (more correctly 'Śālakaṅṭaka'). Due to several reasons, Rāvaṇa became antagonistic to the Vedic culture, which eulogised Indra, Agni and Vishṇu as supreme gods. He, on the other hand was a devotee of Śiva Mahādeva, the Lord of the extensive tribal regions.

From several accounts found in the Epic, it can be gathered that the predecessors of Rāvaṇa had to bear humiliation inflicted on them by the rising Aryan power in Central India. Rāvaṇa having attained suzerainty in the Daṇḍaka region, challenged the alleged superiority of the Aryans. It was

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not possible for him to submit to any alien power whosoever it might be. Naturally, he came into clash with Rāma, the Aryan prince of Ayodhyā, who was extending his hegemony in the south.

The causes for clash between Rāma and Rāvaṇa and the eventual battle between the forces led by the two chiefs can be gleaned from the Rāmāyaṇa. The Śūrpaṇakhā-episode, killing of a large army of Rāvaṇa led by his trusted chivalrous commanders (Khara, Dūshaṇa, etc.) and elopement of Sītā by Rāvaṇa were the obvious chief causes of the war. Rāvaṇa was vehementally opposed to the Aryans and their way of life, which was a rising menace to the Rākshasa culture represented by Rāvaṇa. He had come to know about the power of Rāma, the great archer, who had established his reputation as a warrior and victor. But Rāvaṇa remained undaunted throughout. He failed to realise as to why a crown-prince of Rāma's stature should have relinquished his throne of the mighty kingdom of Ayodhyā and also his kith and kin, simply on the sweet wish of a woman (Kaikeyī). In the Āraṇyakāṇḍa of the Rāmāyaṇa (ch. 40, verses 4-5), Rāvaṇa despises Rāma and also his Āryan principle of statecraft. Rāvaṇa says that only a fool like Rāma could relinquish his power and pelf. The decision taken by Rāma, in this respect, was in accordance with the moral code enjoined in the Āryan polity. It was in clear contradiction to the Rākshas way of life and the code of conduct followed by Rāvaṇa.

Laṅkā and Siṁhala (or Tāmraparṇī) are separately mentioned in several ancient texts. In the face of the available evidence, it does not seem feasible to identify Laṅkā of Rāvaṇa with Siṁhala or the present Śrī Laṅkā. In the history of Ceylon (Śrī Laṅkā) no reliable references to Rāvaṇa or his exploits are discernible. No early relics, depicting Rāma's episodes or any achievements of Laṅkā's hero, Rāvaṇa, are traceable in the ancient plastic or pictorial art in the entire area of Śri Lankā. On the basis of the source-materials known to us, it can be

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said that the Laṅkā of Rāvaṇa was located somewhere in the borders of Bastar, Orissa and Andhra Pradesh. With the spread of the Aryan culture to the south of the Vindhyan ranges several geographical names travelled from the North to the South and South-East. They became current even in Siṁhala, Brahmadeśa (Burma), Indo-China and Indonesia. The name Laṅkā seems to have been given to the Island of Siṁhala sometime before the Gupta period, by which time the Āryan culture had spread almost throughout the Indian sub-continent.

With all his valour, Rāvaṇa was undoubtedly a human being. It seems that he had ten appellations, not ten heads. In ancient art-relics Rāvaṇa is usually represented as a human being and not a demon. Numerous images of Rāvaṇa in the *Rāvaṇānugraha* form are known in Madhya Pradesh and outside, wherein Rāvaṇa is usually shown in the human form with one head and two arms. The super-human attributes to Rāvaṇa were added to indicate that he was an extremely powerful person, who could even challenge the supremacy of Rāma, his Āryan adversary. It may be pointed out that not only Rāvaṇa but also Rāma and several other heroes of the Rāmāyaṇa, in course of time, came to be credited wih super-natural powers.

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RĀMA AND THE RĀMA LEGEND IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Probably no work in world literature has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of the people as the *Rāmāyaṇa.* The nobility and magnanimity of Rāma's character and the devotion and fidelity of Sītā towards her lord, as also the fraternal loyalty of Laksmaṇa towards his elder brother, have all exercised a far-reaching moral effect on the life style of the people not only in India but also in other countries of Central and South-east Asia. The *Rāmāyaṇa* thus brings together nations that oppose violence, ignorance and inequality, infusing in them the feeling of humanness. It is said that 'to understand the Rāmāyaṇa is to understand Indian wisdom'.

Rāma and Rāma legend seem to have crossed international barriers, and figure in art and literature over a wide canvas. A Chinese translation of some Jātaka stories was done by a Sogdian monk between A.D. 220–280. In these translations of Buddhist tales which are said to date back to the third century A.D. the Rāma legend is related in a form prepared to suit Buddhist interests (Winternitz, *History of Indian Literature,* II, p. 513–quoting Levi, Chavannes and Huber). The Chinese sources as well inform us that the time of the Buddhist philosopher Vasubandhu (4th cent. A.D.) the Rāmāyaṇa was a well known and popular poem. The *Kalpanāmaṇḍitīka* of Kumāralāta foud in Central Asia which was probably written towards the close of the second century A.D., mentions the public recitation of the Rāmāyaṇa. It therefore appears that the Great Epic had reached Central Asia by that time. Its wide diffusion and popularity not only in India but also across the Himalayas seems evident from the Prakrit poem

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Paumcariya (*Padmacarita*) recasted from the Rāmāyaṇa by the Jain monk Vimala Suri in the second half of the first century A.D. as also its recensions in several languages and dialects of Central Asia. There are no doubt variations, probably because of regional factors and basis of information.

The Khotanese and Tibetan versions of the Rāmāyaṇa have no doubt engaged the attention of some western scholars. The Khotanese version of the Great Epic figures in a series of papers published by Sir Harold Bailey in the 'Journal of the American Oriental Society', the 'Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society' as also in the 'Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies' in the late thirties and forties of this century. In his first paper on the Rāma story in Khotanese (JAOS. Vol. 59 pp. 460 ff), Bailey refers to this incomplete story of Rāma and Sītā preserved in the three rolls of the Pelliot Collection of the Bibliolithic Nationale, Paris. The handwriting of the three rolls is uniform pointing to the job of copying being done by a single copyist. In a brief resume of the Khotanese versions, the story begins with a Brahman (*mānavai*) practising austerities in the mountains, worshipping Maheśvara and making *maṇḍalas* (magical circles and pictures). At the end of twelve years, Maheśvaradeva appears and bestows on him the *Cintāmaṇi*, the Jewel satisfying all desires, and a cow for the necessities of life. The Brahmin then took to himself a wife and lived happily whith her begetting a young son Parasurāma. Next begins the story of a valiant king named Daśaratha, called Sahasrabāhu, 'the thousand-armed'. He went about hunting and was entertained by the hermit, but he coveted and carried away the hermit's cow, thus reducing him to penury and begging. Parasurāma, the Brahmin hermit's son next practised austerities for twelve years in the mountains and the God Brahma (Brahmam) bestowed Siddhi upon him. He set out with his axe to settle scores with Daśaratha and finally killing him. This he followed by an endless compeign of slaughtering the Kṣatriya rulers and exalting the Brahman. However, two sons of Daśaratha, called Rāma and Rishman

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(Laksmaṇa) were saved by the queen of Daśaratha, and after twelve years, they, in turn, hunted one Paraśurāma in the mountains and killed him. The brothers then took possession of the whole of Jambudvīpa. The birth of Sīta is as well recorded but in a different situation. She is described as the daughter of Daśagrīva, the king of the Rākṣasas. She was cast away in a box down the river as the astrologers foretold that she would bring ruin to the city and lay it waste. A Rishi seeing the box drew it to the bank and took the girl out of it. He reared her. The story further relates the visit of the two brothers to the place of Sītā who joins them after seeking the permission of the Rishi. She is placed within a magic circle which nothing whether on earth or in the air could transgress. While Rāma and Laksmaṇa go out hunting, Daśagriva flying through the air noticed this lovely woman, but he is unable to reach her because of the magic circle····The vulture (giji) watching over Sītā attacks him but he is slain. Daśagrīva in the guise of a Brāhmaṇa seeks alms. Sītā offers him the alms but is seized by Rāvaṇa who carries her off to Lanka.

The two brothers on return not finding Sītā search for her in forests and thickets. In the twelfth year, the young heroes see two monkeys Sugrīva and Nanda of identical nature. The latter ties a mirror on his hand to distinguish him from his brother in the fight. Sugrīva is killed in the fight with the arrow of Rāma. News about Sītā is solicited by Nanda through his monkey. It is through Lapuśā, a female monkey that news about Daśagrīva carrying away Sītā to Lankāpurī is obtained. The monkeys build the stone bridge to cross the water. The approach of Rāma is announced to Daśagrīva who is advised by his senior ministers to give up Sītā. Daśagrīva refuses to listen. He practises austerities and makes maṇḍalas. Daśagrīva failing to gain *Siddhi*, takes a serpent, extracts his poison and mixes with butter to put on his arrow. He shoots this arrow at Rāma who falls unconscious. Jīvaka, the physician, is summoned and at his behest Nanda the monkey goes to fetch the herb but forgetting the name, tears up the peak of the

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mountain and brings the whole thing to Jīvaka. Rāma is restored to health.

The story ends in a dramatic situation. Daśagrīva who takes Sītā in his arms to sky is shot down and he supplicates Rāma for his life promising to pay tribute. He is left unharmed. Rāma and Laksmaṇa live together with Sītā for a hundred years. The people are, however, distressed and dissatisfied. Sītā feels that she is the cause and has become a joke among the people. She speaks to Rāma and descends into the earth. The story is carried further. Rāma returns to the ocean where he overcomes the sea monsters by burning *añjana* (ointment) and mustard over it compelling them to flee, and Rāma safely returns to Jambudvīpa. As usual, in the Jātakas and Avadānas, the Buddha Śākyamuni is identified with Rāma and Maitreya with Laksmaṇa. Daśaratha comes to the Buddha and receives instruction to live according to Dharma. The Buddha exhorts his followers to seek Bodhi.

Besides the Khotanese, the Tibetan version of the Rāmāyaṇa equally provides an interesting bit of information. It is however known from the allusion to Vālmīki in the Buddhist poem published by Ernest Leumann that Valamiki's name and atleast some parts of the Rāmāyaṇa as well were known. Certain diversions are no doubt traceable in other versions of the Rāma story. The Tibetan version is provided by F.W. Thomas and Mlle Laloo in the paper entitled 'A Ramayana story in Tibetan from Chinese Turkestan' in Indian Studies in honour of C.R. Lanman and in *Journal Asiatique* 1936. II. 560 respectively.

Some similarity as also differences are traceable in the Khotanese and Tibetan versions. Thus, the account of the conflict of Daśaratha and Paraśurāma does not appear in the Tibetan, and the episode of Paraśu Rāma in the Rāmāyaṇa is different. There too it is Rāma who overcomes the Rishi's son. In both the Tibetan and the Khotanese versions, Sītā is the daughter of Daśagrīva as also in such Indian Rāma tales, as in

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the Jain *Paumcariya* of the first century A. D. and the late additions to the Rāmāyaṇa, the *Adbhotottarākhaṇḍa*. The magic circle around Sītā also appears in the Malay story such as the *Hikayat Seri Rama*. In the fight of the two monkeys it is Nanda who survives and Sugrīva is slain by Rāma, whereas in Vālmīki and the Tibetan text Vālin is defeated and Sugriva survives. Nanda corresponds to Hanumant in the capture of Lankāpure. The identification mark for recognising Rāma's ally (Nanda in Khotanese and Sugriva in the Tibetan) is the same–namely the mirror tied on the arm. The fetching of the herb–Tibetan *hri-da* and Khotanese *amrratta-Samjīva* from the Himavant is equally identical in both the texts. Incidentally this *amrratta Samjiva* corresponding to Sanskrit *mrita-sanjīvani*–reviver of the dead–is known in the Mahābhārata and the Purāṇas as *amritā*, and in the old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa texts as *amritānjivanī* and *amritāsanjivani* used as a medicinal herb. The details of Rāma shooting the right toe of Daśagriva is also traced in the Tibetan version. It might as well be noted that the Khotanese story is adapted by means of prologue and epilogue to Buddhist teachings. Daśagriva is not slain but–converted at the end of the poem. Similarly, Rāvaṇa is a worthy Buddhist in the *Lankāvatara Sūtra*, and in Jain texts as a faithful Jain. Thomas, however, does not trace any impact of Buddhism in the unpublished Tibetan text, nor is it indicated by Mlle Laloo in the similar manuscript at Bibliotheque Nationale. According to Bailey, the Khotanese version of the Rāma story may be considered as Indian composition. No purely Central Asian traits have been noticed. The date of the Khotanese texts are still uncertain. The language of this Rāma text is the same as that in poems referring to the Khotanese kings Visa-Kirtti and Visa-Dharma of still uncertain date. The language is supposed to be similar to that found in documents relating to Turks in Kansu which are likely to be of the ninth century A.D.

Besides the Khotanese and the Tibetan versions of the Rāmāyana, Mongolia had its own version of this Epic, probably

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based on the Tibetan one. It is as well proposed that the Rāmāyaṇa story was known in Siberia and there is evidence of the epic having been translated in the Kalmyk language (Lokesh Chandra, (Ed) *India's Contribution to World Thought and Culture* Madras 1970 p. 631).

On the basis of the available evidence, it may be proposed that Rāmāyaṇa was known in Central Asia very probably by the second century A.D. and its *terminus ad quem*—the last known record could be placed sometime in the ninth century of the Christian era. During the first centuries of the Christian era, the Buddhists had started using Sanskrit in their literary works. In this context reference might be made to *Buddhacharita*-an ornate epic (Kāvya) of Aśvaghoṣa. This work in Sanskrit had the *Rāmāyaṇa* of Vālmīki as his model from which he freely borrowed. It was also translated into Chinese. The poet seems to be at home with the older text of the Ādi-Kavi and parrels can as well be traced, as for instance, in the treatment of Suddhodana bemoaning for his son's exit and the charioteer returning without the price, like Daśaratha bereft of Rāma. Chandaka's return to Kapilavastu fits in with Sumanta's return to Ayodhya without Rāma. It is clear that Aśvaghoṣha was indebted to Vālmīki. Incidentally one of this poet's work–the *Sāriputra-prakaraṇa,* which is not traceable in India, was found in extracts in Central Asia. It is a nine act play depicting the story of the conversion of Sāriputra and Maudgalyāna. The reference to this work, unconnected with the Rāma legend in Central Asia, is only to suggest that probably it was through Aśvaghoṣa's works that the Rāma legend seems to have reached Central Asia. It is quite likely that the Daśaratha Jātaka might have had some impact particularly in Chinese translations. As regards the Khotanese and Tibetan versions, the activities of the main actors, Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and Hanumana as also Daśagrīva–the ten-headed Rāvaṇa, and the role of Sītā the principal figure do show a greater degree of similarity. The difference, however, lies in the fate of Rāvaṇa, and the status of Sītā described as Rāvaṇa's daughter and abandoned by him. The last aspect

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namely Ravaṇa as the father of Sītā figures in *Guay-Dvorabhi* the Laotian version of the *Rāmāyana*. These might be local variations depending on the phantasy of the author.

The Rāmāyaṇa is one of the gems of world's creative writing that brings those closer together who oppose violence, ignorance and inequality. It is noted for its humanistic message seeking to elevate men and their life style better. It is rightly said that to understand the Rāmāyaṇa is to understand Indian wisdom. Probably no other work of world literature has ever produced so profound an influence on the life and thought of the people as the Rāmāyaṇa. The nobility and magnanimity of Rama's character and conjugal devotion and fidelity of Sītā have exercised such a moral influence through the ages.

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जावा का लारा जोंगरंग मंदिर एवं राम कथा

सन्ध्या राव, शोध-छात्रा, गोरखपुर विश्वविद्यालय

जावा का लारा जोंगरंग मंदिर समूह दक्षिण पूर्व एशिया में हिन्दू वास्तुकला के विकसित रूप का एक उत्कृष्ट नमूना है। यह मन्दिर समूह प्रबनन घाटी में स्थित है। इस मन्दिर के निर्माण के संबंध में एक रोचक कथा प्रचलित है। इस लोक कथा के अनुसार इस मन्दिर का निर्माण लावण्यमयी राजकुमारी लारा जोंगरंग के नाम पर हुआ था। राजकुमारी लारा जोंगरंग के विवाह के लिए यह शर्त रखी गयी थी कि वह उस व्यक्ति से विवाह करेगी जो एक ही रात्रि में एक सहस्त्र मन्दिरों का निर्माण करा सकेगा। कहते हैं उससे विवाह के लिए इच्छुक एक दुस्साहसी युवक ने एक रात में एक हजार मन्दिरों के निर्माण का बीड़ा उठाया। उसने अपना काम लगभग पूरा कर लिया था किन्तु तभी सबेरा हो गया। परिणामतः किंचित अधूरे पन के कारण लारा जोंगरंग के साथ विवाह का उसका स्वप्न भंग हो गया। यह लोक कथा मन्दिर की निर्माण प्रक्रिया को उद्घाटित करने के बदले और अधिक रहस्यात्मक बना देती है।

लारा जोंगरंग मन्दिर समूह का अन्वेषण उन्नीसवीं सदी के अन्तिम चरण में हुआ। जग्यकर्त की पुरातत्व परिषद ने १८८५ ई० में इस क्षेत्र को आच्छादित किये हुए द्रुम लताओं के समूह तथा ज्वालामुखी से निकले हुए लावा के जमाव को साफ करके इस पुरातात्विक वैभव को प्रकाशित किया।[2] इस मन्दिर का निर्माण नवीं शती ई० के उत्तरार्द्ध अथवा १०वीं सदी ई० के प्रारम्भ में हुआ। सिदे का मत है कि इसका निर्माण ९१५ ई० में राजा बलितिंग की स्मृति में कराया गया था।[3] इस विशाल मन्दिर समूह की एक उल्लेखनीय विशेषता यह है कि इसमें भारत के प्रचलित विभिन्न धर्मों एवं सम्प्रदायों के समन्वय का उदार प्रयत्न दिखाई देता है। यह मन्दिर समूह चतुर्दिक छोटे-छोटे बौद्ध मन्दिरों से घिरा हुआ है। इस समूह में आठ प्रमुख मन्दिर हैं जो मध्यवर्ती भाग में वर्गाकार वेदिका पर निर्मित हैं। इनके चतुर्दिक १६० छोटे-छोटे मन्दिर तीन क्रमागत पंक्तियों में व्यवस्थित हैं।[4] अधिकांश छोटे मन्दिर क्षत-विक्षत हो चुके हैं किन्तु बड़े मन्दिर अपेक्षाकृत अच्छी स्थिति में हैं। दूर से देखने पर यह मन्दिर-समूह एक तान्त्रिक चक्र जैसा लगता है।[5]

इस मन्दिर समूह के केन्द्र में शिव का मन्दिर है जिसके उत्तर एवं दक्षिण में क्रमशः विष्णु एवं ब्रह्मा के मन्दिर स्थित हैं। शिव मन्दिर सर्वाधिक ऊँचा है, इसकी ऊँचाई साठ फीट है। इसकी ऊँचाई एवं स्थिति से इस बात की पुष्टि होती है कि इस मन्दिर समूह का निर्माण मूलतः शैव मतावलम्बियों के उत्साह का प्रतिफल

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था ।[६] यह एक रोचक तथ्य है कि इस शिव मन्दिर के कटघरे की आंतरिक दीवारों पर रामायण की कथा से संबंधित अधिकांश महत्वपूर्ण घटनाएँ सुन्दर ढंग से उत्कीर्ण हैं । रामायण से सम्बद्ध ये चित्र प्रारम्भ से लेकर राम द्वारा समुद्र पर सेतु बाँधने तक का दृश्य प्रस्तुत करते हैं । इसके बाद की घटनाओं से सम्बद्ध चित्र नहीं मिलते । कुछ इतिहासकारों ने यह अनुमान व्यक्त किया है कि आगे की कथा ब्रह्मा के मन्दिर के कटघरे पर उत्कीर्ण रही होगी क्योंकि ब्रह्मा मन्दिर के कटघरे के जीर्ण-शीर्ण अवशेषों में टूटे-फूटे चित्रों के अवशेष उपलब्ध हुए हैं ।[७]

रामायण की कथा से सम्बद्ध जो दृश्य शिव मन्दिर के कटघरे के चौखटे पर बने हुए हैं उनमें प्रथम दृश्य शेषशायी विष्णु का है । इस चित्र में केकड़ों, मछलियों आदि जलजन्तुओं से भरपूर दोलायमान सागर के वक्ष पर शेष-शैया पर लेटे हुए विष्णु को प्रदर्शित किया गया है । विष्णु के बगल में गरुण है तथा समीप ही कुछ बैठी हुई आकृतियाँ हैं । इनमें एक आकृति किसी सन्यासी की प्रतीत होती है जो विष्णु को कुछ देता हुआ प्रदर्शित किया गया है ।[८] राम कथा का यह अंश बालमीकि कृत रामायण अथवा जावानी रामायण की कथा पर आधृत नहीं प्रतीत होता है । सम्भव है इसकी प्रेरणा कालिदास कृत रघुवंश महाकाव्य से ग्रहण की गयी हो । रघुवंश के दसवें सर्ग में इस बात का उल्लेख है कि "भृगु ऋषि के नेतृत्व में राक्षसों से त्रस्त देवगण विष्णु के पास गये थे ।[९] सम्भवतः इसी घटना की कलात्मक अभिव्यक्ति लारा जोंगरंग के शिवमन्दिर में उत्कीर्ण इस प्रथम दृश्य में की गयी है । इसी के क्रम में दूसरे दृश्य के अन्तर्गत राजा दशरथ उनकी रानी तथा पुत्रों को प्रदर्शित किया गया है ।[१०] सम्भवतः इसी दृश्य में विश्वामित्र की उपस्थिति भी दिखाई गयी है ।[११] तीसरे से लेकर नवें चौखटे तक ताड़का एवं एक अन्य राक्षसी का राम द्वारा बध, सीता स्वयंवर, धनुषभंग, परशुराम का आगमन आदि दृश्य अंकित हैं । दसवें चौखटे पर भरत के सिंहासनारोहण का दृश्य है ।[१२] इस दृश्य में संगीत एवं नृत्य के साथ प्रसन्न बदन सभासदों की आकृतियाँ हैं । किन्तु उल्लास के इस वातावरण में भी भरत एवं उसकी पत्नी की मुद्रा विषाद युक्त दिखाई देती है । ग्यारहवें चौखटे का दृश्य अत्यन्त कारुणिक है । इस दृश्य में चिन्ता मग्न वृद्ध राजा दशरथ तथा उनकी शोकाकुला रानी कौशल्या का प्रभावपूर्ण अंकन है ।[१३] राजा का मस्तक उसकी बाँयी भुजा पर टिका हुआ है और रानी बाँयी हाथ से अपने आँखों को बन्द किये हुए मानों आँसुओं को रोकने का प्रयत्न कर रही है । राजा के दायी ओर बैठे दो अनुचरों के उदास मुखमण्डल सम्पूर्ण चित्र को अधिक प्रभावशाली बना देते हैं, इसी क्रम में अगले चौखटे पर राम वनगमन का दृश्य उत्कीर्ण है ।[१४] दो घोड़ों द्वारा खींचे जा रहे रथ में बैठकर राम, सीता और लक्ष्मण वन के लिए प्रस्थान कर रहे हैं । इस चित्र की एक उल्लेखनीय विशेषता यह है कि राम और लक्ष्मण को विषादयुक्त मुद्रा में दिखाया गया है किन्तु सीता प्रसन्न मुद्रा में हैं । सम्भवतः अरण्य में निवास करते हुए भी पति के सानिध्य की कल्पना उनकी प्रसन्नता का

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कारण है। अगला दृश्य कुछ अस्पष्ट सा है। इसमें आभूषणों से अलंकृत किसी राज पुरुष की देख-रेख में घुघराले बालों वाले अनेक व्यक्तियों को विभिन्न कार्यों में संलग्न दिखाया गया है। इसी दृश्य में एक महिला अपने सम्मुख तीन थैलियाँ रखे बैठी है। कुछ इतिहासकारों ने यह सम्भावना व्यक्त की है कि यह दृश्य दिवंगत राजा दशरथ के श्राद्ध का चित्र प्रस्तुत करता है।[१५]

इसके बाद क्रमश: राम एवं भरत का चित्रकूट में मिलन, राम द्वारा भरत को अपनी पादुका सौंपना, राम और विराध का युद्ध, राम द्वारा सीता को पीड़ित करने वाले कौए को दण्ड तथा सूर्पणखा से संबंधित घटनाएँ प्रदर्शित हैं। इन चित्रों में सूर्पणखा से संबंधित अंश अधिक कलात्मक एवं प्रभावशाली लगते हैं।[१६] सूर्पणखा अपनी दासी सहित राम के समक्ष घुटने टेक कर बैठी है तथा उपहार स्वरूप उन्हें कोई वस्तु दे रही है। वन का दृश्य दो वृक्षों के माध्यम से व्यक्त किया गया है। एक वृक्ष के नीचे चुपचाप खड़ी सीता ईर्ष्या भाव से सूर्पणखा की ओर देख रही हैं। इस दृश्य से संबंधित दूसरे दृश्य में सूर्पणखा एवं उसकी दासी को लक्ष्मण के सम्मुख उपस्थित दिखाया गया है। लक्ष्मण अपने बायें हाथ को उठाए हुए एक उंगली से उन्हें वहाँ से हट जाने के लिये संकेत कर रहे हैं। उनके दूसरे हाथ में तीर के समान कोई आयुध है। इस दृश्य में सूर्पणखा अत्यन्त क्षुब्ध दिखाई देती है। अगले दृश्य में सीता को अपनी झोपड़ी में बैठे हुए प्रदर्शित किया गया है तथा लक्ष्मण को प्रहरी के रूप में प्रस्तुत किया गया है। पार्श्ववर्ती दृश्य में राम को घने वन में स्वर्णमृग पर बाण चलाते हुए दिखाया गया हैं।[१७] मृग के ऊपर राक्षस मारीच की आकृति बनी हुई है। राम के बाँये हाथ में धनुष है। दौड़ते हुए स्वर्ण मृग को पीछे मुड़कर देखते हुए प्रदर्शित किया गया है। इसके बाद ही ब्राह्मण वेशधारी रावण द्वारा सीता के हरण तथा रावण-जटायु युद्ध के दृश्य हैं। पलायमान रावण को सीता के साथ एक पटल पर आसीन दिखाया गया है जिसे एक पक्ष युक्त राक्षस उठाए हुए उड़ रहा है। इसी दृश्य में सीता घायल जटायु को अंगूठी जैसी कोई वस्तु देती हुई चित्रित की गयी हैं। इसके अगले दृश्य में जटायु लक्ष्मण को वह अंगूठी प्रदान करते हुए प्रदर्शित किया गया है। आगे इसी क्रम में राम को कबन्ध का बध करते हुए दिखाया गया है। कबन्ध के कन्धे तथा पेट पर एक-एक सिर दिखाया गया है साथ ही मृत्यु के बाद कबन्ध को कमल पुष्प पर बैठकर स्वर्ग जाते हुए प्रदर्शित किया गया है। अगला चित्र एक राजकुमार का है जो एक जलाशय के तट पर खड़ा होकर मगर पर शरसन्धान कर रहा है। जलाशय के तट पर प्रार्थना की मुद्रा में एक स्त्री खड़ी है। सम्भवत: इस दृश्य में पम्पा सरोवर एवं शबरी से संबंधित घटनाओं की ओर संकेत है।[१८]

इस क्रम में अगला चित्र राम और हनुमान के मिलन एवं संवाद का दृश्य उपस्थित करता है। इसके बाद दु:खी सुग्रीव का चित्र है, जिसे पेड़ पर बैठकर रोते हुए प्रस्तुत किया गया है। इसके बाद वाले चित्र में राम एवं सुग्रीव की वार्ता है। राम

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सुग्रीव को आश्वस्त करने के लिए एक ही बाण से ७ वृक्षों को बिद्ध करते हुए दिखाये गये हैं। परवर्ती दो चित्रों में सुग्रीव एवं बालि के युद्ध एवं बालि की मृत्यु का अंकन है। इसके बाद क्रमशः सुग्रीव तथा तारा का विवाह, राम का बानर योद्धाओं से विचार-विमर्श एवं हनुमान के लंका में प्रवेश के दृश्य हैं। तदुपरान्त हनुमान द्वारा सीता के खोज का दृश्य है।[19] अगले दृश्य में हनुमान को लंका दहन करते हुए दिखाया गया है तथा इसके बाद के दृश्य में हनुमान राम को अपनी लंका यात्रा तथा सीता से संबंधित विवरण सुनाते हुए प्रदर्शित किये गये हैं।[20] अगले दृश्य में समुद्र के तट पर खड़े धनुर्धारी राम तथा जल से निकलते हुए समुद्र देव का चित्रण है। अंतिम दृश्य राम द्वारा समुद्र पर सेतु निर्माण को प्रदर्शित करता है इस दृश्य में समुद्र की सतह पर उछलती मछलियों को बानरों द्वारा प्रक्षिप्त पाषाण खण्डों को निगलते हुए दिखाया गया है।

इस प्रकार जावा के लारा जोंगरंग मन्दिर वास्तु में उत्कीर्ण राम कथा अपनी अद्भुत कलात्मकता के साथ प्राचीन इण्डोनेशिया में रामायण की लोकप्रियता को प्रमाणित करती है। इतना ही नहीं रामकथा से संबद्ध इन उत्कीर्ण चित्रों में कुछ ऐसे नवीन तत्व है जो मौलिक एवं स्थानीय प्रतीत होते हैं। क्योंकि उनका उल्लेख बाल्मीकि रामायण में नहीं मिलता है। उदाहरण के लिए ताड़का बध से संबंधित दृश्य में ताड़का के साथ एक और राक्षसी को प्रस्तुत किया गया है, इसी प्रकार विराध के साथ हुए संघर्ष में भी विराध के साथ एक अन्य राक्षस का चित्र है। सीता द्वारा जटायु को अंगूठी प्रदान करना तथा जटायु द्वारा वह अंगूठी लक्ष्मण को प्रदान करना भी एक मौलिक परिकल्पना है। इसी प्रकार दो सिर वाले कबन्ध तथा पत्थर निगलती हुए मछलियों का चित्रण भी कलाकारों की मौलिक कल्पना का परिचायक है। डास्ततरहेम का मत है[21] कि इन नवीन तत्वों का समावेश इस कारण से हुआ था कि इन दृश्यों का निर्माण पुराने जावानी साहित्य के आधार पर न होकर परवर्ती काल में इण्डोनेशिया में प्रचलित उन राम कथाओं के आधार पर हुआ जिनमें रामायण की मूल कथा को सुरक्षित रखते हुए भी कुछ रोचक नवीन कल्पनाओं का समावेश कर लिया गया है।

टिप्पणी

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१३. वही-प्लेट २० चित्र ४ ।
१४. वही-प्लेट २० चित्र ५ ।
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१७ वही-प्लेट २१, चित्र २ ।
१८. चटर्जी, बी० आर०-वही-पृष्ठ ८० ।
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२१. चटर्जी, बी० आर०-वही-पृष्ठ ८१ ।

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RĀMA-TRADITION IN SOUTH-EAST ASIA : A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

V.C. Srivastava*

Rāma-tradition is one of the most popular, widespread and influential themes in the process of 'Indianization' in Asia in general and South-east Asia in particular[1]. The episode of Rāma (*Rāma-kathā*) which had literary beginnings as early as the 6th century B.C. and developed through Sanskrit, and regional languages of India till modern times as well as by different traditions-Buddhism, Jainism, Saivism etc[2]. travelled throughout South-east Asia captivating the hearts and souls of many tribes, races and cultural groups.[3] This tradition has become a part and parcel of the history and cultural heritage of not only India but of South-east Asia also. The tradition finds ample and continuous place in the literary tradition[4] of the region as a whole, irrespective of difference in linguistic sectarian and ethnic-racial complex. Similarly, the art-tradition of different countries and mediums[5] has also imbibed the legend of Rāma with abiding faith and engrossing aesthetics. It appears to be an enigma engrossed in mystery that even today this society with Semetic and Western dominance continues to relish in the sweetness and fragrance of Rāma-Kathā[6].

No doubt, the story of Rāma in South-east Asia has been told, retold, surveyed and projected by many[7] in the past but the historian is still bewildered regarding the role of this tradition in South-east Asian history as an independent yet related variable in the complex process of Indianization. The mystery behind the popularity of this tradition in South-east Asia has to be solved against historical perspective of

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state formation and the role of cultural model in this process, which is ultimately subsumed in the cumulative process of acculturation. In view of this perspective the enquiry is proposed to be undertaken under two frameworks :—

1. The nature of Rāma-tradition in South-east Asia.
2. The compulsions of State-formation and the acculturation.

These two frameworks have been evolved with a view on the hypothesis that Rāma-tradition was one of effective means for meeting the requirement of state formation and ultimately helping in the process of acculturation.

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The Nature of Rāma-Tradition in South-East Asia

A synoptic survey of the materials on Rāma-tradition in this region is essential for knowing its nature. The recitation of *Rāmāyaṇa* is referred to in a Kambuja inscription of the 6th century A.D. along with its gift to the temple which is a Śaiva-Sun temple. Another Kambuja inscription refers to the *Rāmāyaṇa* along with other literary works of India.[8] The occasion for this inscription was the installation of a *Trimūrti* temple. There is no reference to Rāma as the incarnation of Vishṇu in an inscription of Kambuja (ancient period). Many temples of Kambuja as Kohker, (Prasat An Temple), Angkor (Bantei Srei Temple) Angkor Vat etc. have Rāma-reliefs.[9] In these reliefs Rāma as a hero and victorious king is depicted, which is a recurring theme in other countries of south-east Asia. These temples are dated between the 9th-14th century A.D. This was the period of the Kambuja empire.

In Indonesia Rāma-reliefs on temple-walls are quite popular as is evident from the Prambanan (750-850 A.D.) and the Panataran group of temples[10] (930-1400 A.D.). Of the Prambanan complex Loro Jonggrang temple dedicated to Siva (central), Brahmā and Vishṇu have Rāma reliefs such as abduction of Sītā, Rāma Killing a demon, Rāma acting against sea, Aṅgada before Rāma, marching monkeys, coronation of Sugrīva etc. while the Panataran Rāmāyaṇa scenes inculde wounded

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Hanumān etc. The main emphasis in these scenes is connected with Rāma's victory over Rāvaṇa.

In champa there are references to Rāma along with other incarnations of Vishṇu in the inscriptions and there is a reference to a Vālmīka-temple in the inscription of Prakashdharma[11] (7th century A.D.). These facts show that the tradition of Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa was quite well known in Champa and Rāma as an incarnation was an object of worship. A few Rāma images have also been reported from Suvarṇadvīpa.[12] The kings were well versed in the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata along with other subjects of Indian origin.[13]

There is a vast literature on Rāma[14] in South-East Asia as is evident from Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa (900–1000 A.D.), Malāya Seirama, (1500 A.D.), Javanese Seratkanda and Rāma Keling (1500–1600), Cambodian Rāma-kīrti (1500–1600 A.D.), and Siamese Rāma–Kiyen and Rāma–Jātaka (1500–1600 A.D.), Rama–Yagan (1800 A.D.). There are masked plays (*Khon*) in Thailand, shadow plays (*Wayang*) in Indonesia, and dramas (*Yampve*) in Burma in modern times on the Rāma–episode.

The above synoptic survey reveals that Rāma–tradition was introduced into South–East Asia in the wake of Indian cultural expansion there in the beginning of the Christian era and it founds its visible expression in inscriptions, art and literature from the 6th century A.D. to quite recent times. It is still a living tradition in many parts of South–east Asia. Such a longevity of the Rāma–tradition in this region in spite of social, religious and cultural changes leads us to believe that there is a deep rooted historical reason behind this phenomenon. To me it appears that the compulsions of state–formation and acculturation provide the clue to the understanding of this phenomenon.

The Compulsions of State Formation and Acculturation

Two models have been proposed for the concept of state and kingship in South–East Asia :—

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1. Transplantation of the Idealised Indian Concept of State and Kingship as propounded by Heine Geldern and others.[15]

2. Recently it has been replaced by structural model of what is termed as fragmentary or segmented sovereignty having a pluralist view of state, as it has been propounded by Wolters, Naerssen, Herman Kulke etc.[16]

Without entering into the controversy as to which model is more akin to historical reality it is assumed that both models contain some grain of truth because the former model is based upon theory while the latter model is based upon practice. In both cricumstances there was a necessity for an ideal powerful leader of man for the formation, and consolidation of the empire which was not unitary but federalistic, at most of the times in the history of South-east Asia.

The ideal was provided by the Rāma-episode along with other modes. Rāma stands for Dharma, who was the ideal hero and king, who ruled with exemplary justice without favour and fear and realised the age-old dream of a Chakravarti *Samrāṭ*. He was an embodiment of all that is good and noble in Indian culture. He stands for political cohesion, social solidarity and cultural[17] values. All these virtues are well illustrated in the Rāma-kathā as enshrined in the art, literature and tradition of India as well as South-East Asia. The kings and courtiers of South-East Asia adopted this model for propagation of their divine royalty, centralised statehood, social cohesion and cultural values of India in order to have allegiance of the people. It was a sort of subtle means for the legitimation of kingly authority in the alien land with pluralist composition. Certain historical analysis may be cited here to corroborate this hypothesis.

1. The depiction of Rāma-scenes on the walls of the temples which were intimately connected with royalty[18] in South-East Asia may be indicative of this hypothesis.

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2. Rāma was the incarnation of Vishṇu who was identified with king in this region. For instance Angkor Vat is the Cosmos with God-King as the main figure.[19] Rāma is depicted in Saiva temples in order to emphasise the God-King idea to the people.

3. There is a text–*Kāmandaka*[20] in old Javanese literature where the sage Kāmandaka explains the duties of the king with illustrations from the Rāmāyaṇa and Mahābhārata.

4. The Devarāja cult[21] of Cambodia was a similar official device for the legitimation of divine sovereignty.

5. The worship of Rāma in South-east Asia has not been popular as an independent cult because there is scarcely any temple of South-East Asia which might have been dedicated to Rāma as a god exclusively. As such the reason for the popularity of the Rāma-episode is not to be sought in the cult-form but in non-cult form which may be political and cultural.

6. If Rāma-tradition had its strength in cult-form it would never have been adopted by non-Hindu kings of South-East Asia in Medieval and Modern times.[22]

7. There are fusions of Indian and local traditions in the Rāma-tradition in South-East Asia which go to prove that there has been acculturations in this tradition in course of history. It was this mixing of traditions—local and Indian which led to its adoption and survival for such a long time. A few examples may be given of such intermixtures. The story of Śabari has been given an addition in the Old Javanese Rāmāyaṇa. She informs that Vishṇu died after eating her mala in his Vārāhavatāra and she ate the dead body of Vishṇu on account of which her face became black. She requests that Rāma should cleanse her face.[23] This is a symbolic reference to the Aryanization of non-Aryan tribes. In Malaya Seri Rama, for instance, there are references to the worship of Allah by Rāvaṇa who was expelled by his father for bad character.[24] This shows the mixture of Islamic god in the Rāmāyaṇa tradition. Such examples can be

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multiplied when local colours has been given to the Rāma-episode. The Siamese Rāma Kiyen has all the characters as the residents of Siam. There are several episodes in Rāma-Kiyen which are local inventions of Siam.[25] In view of such differences and additions it can be said that the Rāma-tradition as has been preserved and propagated in South-East Asia is actually a mixture of Indian and indigenous traditions. It has been the compulsions of state-formation and acculturations which led to the popularity and survival of the Rāma tradition in South-East Asia.

The problem of centralised state existed in modern times also which was tried to be solved by various means out of which the Rāmā-tradition[26] was one important means and model of poltical stability, social cohesion and cultural mixings.

In view of such indications it is hypothesised that the Rāma-tradition was one of the means and models for legitimation of state-formation and consolidation and acculturation in South-East Asia and here lies the secret of its popularity and long life.

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SRI RĀMA IN KARNATAKA ART AND LITERATURE

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Eversince the Aryanisation of South India, the great epic Rāmāyaṇa has been playing a major role in the culture of South India in general and Karnataka in particular. The impact this epic had in the course of these centuries can be seen in all walks of life of Karnataka culture such as literature, music, dance, art, numismatics, epigraphy, folk art and literature, social conditions etc. Thus there is no activity of cultural life in Karnataka which has not been significantly influenced by the Rāmāyaṇa and the great personalities Rāma, Sītā, Lakshmaṇa and Hanumān. It may not be possible in a paper like this to discuss the entire influence or the part played by Rāmāyaṇa in the life and culture of Karnataka and hence only some illustration will be highlighted to show the impact of Rāma or Rāmāyaṇa.

In the field of kannada literature one can see the maximum influence of Rāmāyaṇa Vālmīki. The Kannada poets, dramatists, prose writers, Champu composers again and again selected Rāmāyaṇa either in its fullness or in parts to write works in Kannada. They were not tired of repeating the story of Rāma. On the other hand every new poet saw something unique or new in the characterisation of Rāma and selected that theme to highlight his work. This could not have been done or possible if people did not show sufficient interest in the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. Thus the people liked it and the writers were encouraged to dwell in their literary compositions on the lotus feet of Śrī Rāma. Thus each work became a new work. Even the latest or contemporary poet like Kuvempu has chosen to narrate the story of Rāmāyaṇa in epic verse form. This shows Rāmāyaṇa has proved to be relevant even in the present century even to the scientifically oriented people. Now let us examine

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some of the Kannada works on the Rāmāyaṇa in a chronological order.

The earliest work in Kannada, so far known, is *Kavirājamārga.* It was written sometime in 817–877 A.D. Most scholars agree that it was written in and around 850. A.D. This work contains many poems connected to the Rāmāyaṇa. Hence it has been surmised that these poems might have been borrowed from some Kannada work on the Rāmāyaṇa which has not come down to us. However, some feel that these poems were written by the author of the Kavirājamārga himself. Whatever may be the controversy the fact remains that by the middle of the ninth century, the Rāmāyaṇa had made such an impact on Karnataka, that a poet chose to include it in his work. Thus this is the earliest Kannada reference to the Rāmāyaṇa in Kannada.

The next Rāmāyaṇa work in Kannada in ponna's *Bhuvanaika Rāmābhyudaya.* The date of the composition of this work is about 950 A.D. Unfortunately the text of this work has not been found so far. It was written at the instance of Rāshṭrakūṭa King Kṛshṇa III. From the title it appears that the poet has equated his benefactor King Kṛshṇa III with Rāma. Further as ponna was a Jaina, it is also not known whether this is a Rāmāyaṇa of Jaina tradition or of Vedic tradition. Chavvundaraya's work *Trishashṭilakshṇa Mohāpurāṇa* written in 978 A.D., contains the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. But it seems to have been taken from Guṇabhadrāchārya's *uttarapurāṇa* of 898 A.D. and is based on this work. Hence it is not an independent work on the Rāmāyaṇa.

The earliest independent work of the Rāmāyaṇa in Kannada is that of Nāgacandra. His work *Rāmacandra Carita purāṇa* was composed around 1140 A.D. This is a Jaina Rāmāyaṇa. It is said that this Kannada work is based on Vimalasuri's prakrit work on Rāmāyaṇa. However, it has to be admitted that much original material has been incorporated by Nāgacandra in his work. Infact this is one of the good Jaina

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Rāmāyaṇas in kannada and many later Jaina writers have based their work on this work. Kumudendu's Rāmāyaṇa in Shaṭpadi is based on Nāgacandra's work mentioned above. However, he has made lot of changes to suit his needs. The data of this work is about 1275 A.D. Among other Jaina Rāmāyaṇas the following deserve mention. Shishumayana's, *Anjanacaritre* mostly deals with the story of Anjaneya. Its' date is 1472 A.D. Devappas' '*Rāma Vijaya Carite*' in another work of 1525 A.D. It is in Sangatya. Padmanābha's *Rāmacandra Caritra* (1750 A.D.) Devachandra's '*Rāma Kathā Avatāra*' (1750) and Chandra Sāgara Varṇi's '*Jina-Rāmāyaṇa* (1810) are other Jaina Rāmāyaṇas.

Among the Vaidika- Rāmāyanas in Kannada, the most important is *Torave Rāmāyana* by Kumara Vālmīki. It was written in 1580 A.D. Infact he has based his work on Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa and he has treated Rāma as an avatāra of Vishṇu. Bhakti is the main attitude of this work. As this work was written with a religious zeal, the work treats Rāma as God and a paragon of all virtues. As the style is highly attractive, this has become the most popular Rāmāyaṇa in Kannada. It is widely read in Karnataka.

Battalēśvara's Rāmāyaṇa (1700 A.D.) is based upon *Torave-Rāmāyaṇa*. It is also called as *Kaushika Rāmāyaṇa*. This Rāmāyaṇa is popular in northern parts of Karnataka. Narayana Kavi (c 1600 A.D.), Narasappa Kavi (1612 A.D.) Tirumale Vaidya (1650) have translated the uttarakāṇḍa of Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa into Kannada. Timmarasa of 1650 A.D. has written Mārkandeya purāṇa in Kannada, wherein he has given the story of Rāmāyaṇa in detail. Nijagunārya has written '*Advaita Rāmāyaṇa*' which has the essence of Advaita in the story of Rāma. '*Śaṅkara Rāmāyaṇa*' is another work (1700 A.D.) the name of the author of which is not known to us. In the colophon it is said that this story of the Rāmāyaṇa was originally narrated by Brahmā to Nārada and Īśvara narrated this story to Pārvatī to give her an exalted idea of the Rāma Tāraka mantra. '*Dasakanṭha Rāmāyaṇa*' is nothing but a prose form

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of *Torave Rāmāyaṇā* which is in poetry. '*Hanumadrāmāyaṇa*' of Subramanya (1750 A.D.) highlights the birth, and exploits Hanumān. Haridāsa's work *Mūla Rāmāyaṇa* describes the killing of Rāvaṇa and Kumbhakarṇa.

'*Ānanda Rāmāyaṇa*' by Timmamatya (c. 1750) is another fine work in Bhāminī shatpadī. The speciality of this Rāmāyaṇa is that it not only contains the essence of the story of the Rāmāyaṇa but also the story of other avatāras like Vārāha and Narasiṁha, in the Bālakāṇḍa. In the Uttarakāṇḍa is included the reign of Śrī Rāma, his Aswamedha yagya etc. In the same period were composed similar works on Rāmāyaṇa. Among them mention should be made of *Paraśurāma Rāmāyaṇa* of Babburu Ranga, *Sītākalyāṇa* by Giriyamma, *Kushalavara Kālaga, Varada Vithala Rāmāyaṇa* by Vithala, Salyada Krishnaraja's *Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa*, Venkamātya's (1770) *Rāmāyaṇa* in Vardhaka Shatpadi.

Krishnaraja Odeyar III (1784–1868) was a great Mahārāja of Mysore. He was not only a Kannada writer himself but was also a patron of authors. '*Rāmakathā Kalpvṛksha*' is ascribed to him. In the introduction it is said that the author has culled out the essence from Vālmīki Rāmāyaṇa, Vishṇupurāṇa, Padmapurāṇa, Kūrma purāṇa, Adhyātma Rāmāyaṇa, Śivadharmottara etc. and has composed this for the convenience of the readers.

In the nineteenth century many kannada works on the Rāmāyaṇa were written. In fact the Rāmāyaṇa became more popular during the period. This is evidenced by the large number of Rāmāyaṇa works. They may be mentioned as follows.

Nijapati Lakshminarasimha's *Rāmakathārañjana*; Subbramanya Shastri's *Dilīpa carita;* Muddana's *Adbhuta Rāmāyaṇa*, *Śri Ramapaṭṭābhishēka* and *Rāmāśvamēda.* The last mentioned work is of great literary merit and has attracted the attention of scholars and general readers alike.

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In addition to these purely literary works, there are a large number of yakshagaṇa works which were based on episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa. Important of them are parti Subba's *putrakameshti, panchavaṭi, Vāli-sugrīva Kalaga, Setubandhana, Angada Sandhava*, etc. In the present century a large number of dramás are written based upon the Rāmāyaṇa and are enacted by professional troupes which have become quite popular. Dr. K.V. Puttappa's magnamophs *'Śrī Rāmāyaṇa Darshaṇa'* has won acclaim as a great Kannada Rāmāyaṇa and has won Jnānapith award and central Sahitya Academy Award. Even movies based either on the entire story of Rāma (Sampūrṇa Rāmāyaṇa) or some important incidents have been made and they are quite popular more with the audiences in the rural areas. Thus starting from the first literary work in Kannada, upto the present kannada literature is replete with Rāmāyaṇa works.

In the sthalapurāṇas and the local histories Rāma is very popular figure. The anxiety of the local people to associate their place with Śrī Rāma is reflected in the sthalapurāṇas. Hundreds of Sthalapurāṇas give us the same episodes, namely that Rāma was wandering in these places, washed his feet in a tank or river, ate the fruit of a particular tree etc. There are many towns and villages which are named after Śrī Rāma and other members. Examples of Rāmapura, Rāmanahalli, Sītāpura, Sitahalli, Rāmanagara, illustrate this point.

When we examine the Epigraphic literature in Karnataka, we again meet with the same tendency. The epigraphical poets and composers took every opportunity to mention the name of Śrī Rāma and Sītā and others. Of course they could not do it directly as epigraphs did not permit that. Hence they chose clever methods, of doing this. Whenever there was an opportunity to praise the ruling King, they compared that King to Rāma in Valour. 'Sangrāma Rāma; 'Parākrama Rāma' 'Pratijnā Rāma etc were used to compare the King with Śrī Rāma. When two brothers (Yuvaraja) were friends, the epigra-

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phs did not hesitate to compare their affection and Love to Śrī Rāma and Lakshmṇa. Like wise when they compared the queen, she was invariably likened to Sītā. Thus the epigraphs of Karnataka show great awareness of the epic and particularly Śrī Rāma and Sītā.

Śrī Rāma is seen also in the numismatic data of Karnataka. Infact this tendency becomes more pronounced particularly during the Vijayanagar and post Vijayanagara periods. Particularly the Aravidu rulers of Vijayanagara had great regard for Śrī Rāma. Tirumalarya I (1570–71) minted gold and copper coins with Śrī Rāma, on his varāha coins of gold which weigh 52 grams. We see on the obverse a raised seat on which is seated Śrī Rāma with Sītā; Lakshmaṇa stands behind in an attitude of devotion and holds a bow in his right shoulder; Śrī Rāma wears a tall Kirīṭa and his right hand is in Abhaya-mudrā. On the reverse is the Nagari legend Sri Tirumalarya in three lines. Infact Rāmatanki Vārāhas became quite popular in Karnataka during this period and later and every house now almost contains at least one Rāmatanki Vārāha in their Puja.

In the field of art and architecture in Karnataka the influence of Śrī Rāma is stupendous. In the early period we do not come accross the temple specially built for Śrī Rāma. Thus in the Kadamba, Calukya, Rāshṭrakūṭa, Gaṅga and Hoysala periods Śrī Rāma does not seem to have been included as the main deity in the garbagṛha. During the period the episodes of Rāmāyaṇa are carved on the bhitti of the temple as friezes. Important stories of the Rāmāyaṇa are carved throughout the temple in the form of friezes during this period. This is particularly noteworthy in the temples of the Hoysala period. Generally the fourth or the fifth frieze from the bottom of the Bhitti (above horseman, hamsa etc) invariably contain minute carvings of the episodes of the Rāmāyaṇa.

The Hoysala temples at Belur, Halebid, Somanathapura and others contain fine Rāmāyaṇa friezes, minutely carved in soapstone. The Rāmāyaṇa panel from the Mallikārjuna temple

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at Basral may be mentioned here. The following are the sequences of the sculptured panel. Daśaratha perfoming the putrakameshti yagñya–The distribution of Pāyasa–The Birth of Rāma, Lakshmaṇa and others-Court of Daśaratha–Viśwāmitra–Subāhu and Taṭakā, Śamahara-Breaking of Śhiva dhanus–Sītā Svayamvara–Rāma's Vanavāsa–Kabandhasaṁhāra–Disfiguring Sūrpanakhi–Jaṭāyu Saṁhāra by Rāvaṇa–Māricha Vadha. Rāma meeting Vāli and Sugrīva–Samudrollanghana. Battle against Indrajit–Rāma-Rāvaṇa battle–Victory of Rāma–Rāma and Sītā sitting together. Thus these panels depict the story of the Rāmāyaṇa. Such depictions are found in many Hoysala temples. Images of Śrī Rāma adorn many Hoysala temples in the niches as wall sculptures also.

However, when we come to Vijayanagara period, the construction of temples dedicated exclusively to Śrī Rāma becomes popular. The Hazara Rāma temple in Hampi is a good example for Sri Rāma temple of the Vijayanagar period. Built in 1513 A.D. it was a private temple for the royal family. Krishnadevaraya and his queens used to visit this temple daily whenever they were at Hampi. A temple of high artistic merit it is 200 ft. long and 110 ft. wide. Standing Śrī Rāma is in the garbhagṛha. In addition to that on the walls of the temple are scuptured the story of the Rāmāyṇa in low relief.

Hundreds of bronze images of Śrī Rāma, Sītā and Hanumān of the Vijayanagara period have been found either in the temples or now kept in various museums. These images mostly used as utsavamūrtis in temples give us the clue that they were taken in procession in the temples during the Vijaya. nagara period.

The same tradition continued in the post Vijayanagara period, particularly during the Mysore Odeyar period. The Mahārajas of Mysore patronised many temples of Śrī Rāma and rennovated some of them. They also gave grants for proper maintenance of these temples. A large number of bronzes of Śrī Rāma and Sītā of the Mysore Odeyar period

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also have come to light. Now most of the villages contain Śrī Rāma Mandirams where Harikathās of Rāmāyaṇa, particularly during the Rāmanavamī festival are conducted. In important and bigger cities Rāma Mandira take active part in the Rāmanavami festival which is celebrated for periods ranging from 2 days to a month. The most important attraction during these festivals is the classical music concerts by eminent musicians which attracts thousands of people. The Bidaram Krishnappa Rāma Mandira in Mysore city is such a one and is famous all over Karnataka. The paintings of Rāma Paṭṭabhisheka in the Mysore school of painting of the 18th-19th centuries is a common site in old houses, mathas and palace in Karnataka. Thus in the art of Karnataka Śri Rāma is well depicted.

In Karnatak music also the influence of Śrī Rāma can be seen in ample measure. Vāsudevācārya, one of the great composers of Mysore who died a couple of years ago was a great devotee of Rāma and composed and sang many Kritis. Many other composers and musicians also were great devotees of Śrī Rāma. Any music concert of Karnataka style will not be considered complete or adequate if some songs praising Śrī Rāma are not rendered by the musician.

The folk literature and folk arts of Karnataka have received great inspiration from the personality of Śrī Rāma. Thousands of folk tales, folk poems, proverbs, folk theatre and other forms are connected with Śrī Rāma. Even to-day villagers in Karnataka weep over the travails of Rāma and Sītā and feel happy and rejoice in the victory of Rāma. Thus Śrī Rāma has become a part and parcel of Karnataka culture, art and society.

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RĀMĀYAṆA SCENES IN BIHAR SCULPTURES

Dr. Chitta Ranjan Prasad Sinha

The story of Rāmāyaṇa had great impact on the life of Indian people. Rāma's ideal image had engrossed the mind of the masses to such an extent that even the Jainas and the Buddhists could not ignore it and associated him with their religions.

But the image of Rāma was sculptured for the first time in the Gupta period. The Rāmāyaṇic panels from Deogarh,[1] Nachanā Kuṭharā,[2] Saheth Mahth,[3] Śrīngverapura, and Vārāṇasī are well known. There are also some Rāmāyaṇa scenes depicted in Kailashnath temple at Ellora. Likewise some Rāmāyanic scenes have also been discovered from Bihar.

Some very remarkable representations of the Rāmāyaṇic scenes in stucco have been found on a wall of an old temple at Apshad. It is from this village that the famous Apshad stone inscription was found. It refers to the construction of a Viṣṇu temple by king Ādityasena. His mother Mahādevī Śrīmatī constructed a religious college (Maṭha). His wife excavated a wonderful tank. A large sized image of Varāha in therimorphic form is also preserved at Apṣaḍa. The evidence of the inscription coupled with the figure of varāha makes it quite clear that the place was of great importance in the 6th-7th art A.D. for the worship of Lord Viṣṇu. A few years ago a corner of the mound was exposed by the villagers and as many as eight rectangular panels with stucco images depicting Rāmāyaṇic scenes were discovered. One of the panels represents Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā crossing the Gaṅga on a boat.[5]

1. *MASI*, No. 70, pp. 16 18, pl. XV. a, b pl. XVI, a b and pl. XVII, a–c,
2. *East and West*, 17 No. 3–4 pp. 279–80
3. *ASI-AR*, 1907–08 pp. 95–107, pl. XXVVI,
4. *JBRS*, LIV, pp. 216–18 Pl. XVIII–XXII.
5. C. P. Sinha, *Early Sculpture of Bihar*, fig, 48.

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The boat is well depicted showing the boatman with the Oar. The second panel depicts the same group squatting on their knees under the shaded trees before the ascetic Bhāradvāja at Prayāga. The scene is exactly as represented in the Rāmāyaṇa. The third panel shows again the same group crossing the river Yamunā on the raft made of woodlogs tied together with grass ropes with dry bamboos across, as adviced by Bhārdwāja. The fourth panel depicts a scene of the forest where Rāma with Sītā on his lap and Lakṣmaṇa opposite to him in Vīrasana are taking rest under a shade. The fifth panel depicts Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa squatting on knees before an ascetic who has been identified as Vālmikī at Citrakūṭa. The sixth panel shows Rāma and Sītā sitting under a shady tree and Lakṣmaṇa sitting on a branch of a tree with bow and quiver, looking expectantly for the explanation of the loud sound being raised by the procession accompanying Bharata with his army. The seventh panel depicts the procession of the caparisoned elephants and the horses from Ayodhyā coming to Citrakūṭa with Bharat as the leader. And the last panel depicts Bharata falling on knees before Rāma who embraces him in his arms. Sītā and Laksmana are watching the meeting of the two brothers.

The panels thus depicts the Rāmāyaṇic scenes in a running sequence from Rāma's crossing the Gaṅgā to Bharata meeting him at Citrakūṭa. The representation of such unique theme in stucco in the domain of Indian art reminds us of the depiction of the Rāmāyaṇa story in a clear sequence on temple walls of south-east Asia. The stucco panels on stylistic ground appear to be contemporary with the temple constructed by Ādityasena and may be placed in the 7th century A.D.

Of approximately the same date, there are some stone panels carved on the walls of Phatharaghaṭṭi temple at Nālandā which depicts the Rāmāyaṇic scenes. One of the panels[1] dipicts Rāma standing and holding an arrow in the right hand and a bow in the left hand. A kneeling figure with folded hands is

1. Kalpana Desai, *Iconography of Viṣṇu*, pp. 116-17, fig. 82, *JUPHS*, XXIII, p. 202, fig. 2.

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seen to the right of Rāma. A tree with foliage in the background indicates the place to be a forest. The scene carved on the panel may identified as Ahalyā offering her homage to Rāma. Another verson of the same scene is found on the plinth of the Daśāvatāra temple at Deogarth[1] (U. P.). A panel at Nālandā[2] probably represents Rāma and Sīta at Pañcharati. They are seated side by side of conversing with each other. The male figure, who is wearing a *Chhannavīra* Ornament, is holding a bow under his left arm. On the north wall of the stone temple at Nālandā, there is a panel[3] probably depicting Rāvaṇa threatening Sītā. Only a male and a female figures are shown in the scene. The male figure has three heads and six arms, each head having its hair tied in top knots. The six handed figure holds a bow, sword and some indistinct object in his right hand and a pestle and an arrow in two of the left hands, while the remaining third hand is placed in front of his chest. He is shown advancing towards the female figure seated on the left corner, turning her face away from him. Frightened by the advancing male figure, she has placed one of her hands in front of her brest and the other is placed on the ground supporting the weight of her whole body.[4]

Reference may be made to the scene designated as the marriage of Rāma and Sītā which is carved on the hill at Pātharghata in the Bhagalpur district.[5] On stylistic ground this may be assigned to C. 5th century A.D.

A relief from Chausa, now in the Patna Museum, depicting a scene from the Rāmāyaṇa, is interesting for its vivacity and simplicity of diction. It depicts Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with monkeys in search of Sītā.[6] The human figure wearing a crown is vibhiṣaṇa whereas the monkey with a crown is Hanumān.

1. *Ibid.* fig. 80.
2. Panel No. 103.
3. *Ibid.* 102.
4. *JUPHS*, XXIII, pp. 207–08.
5. J. N. Samaddar, *The Glories of Magadha*, (pl. facing page 153)
6. *Patna Museum Catalogue of Antiquities*, pl, XLVIII, Arch No. 6528.

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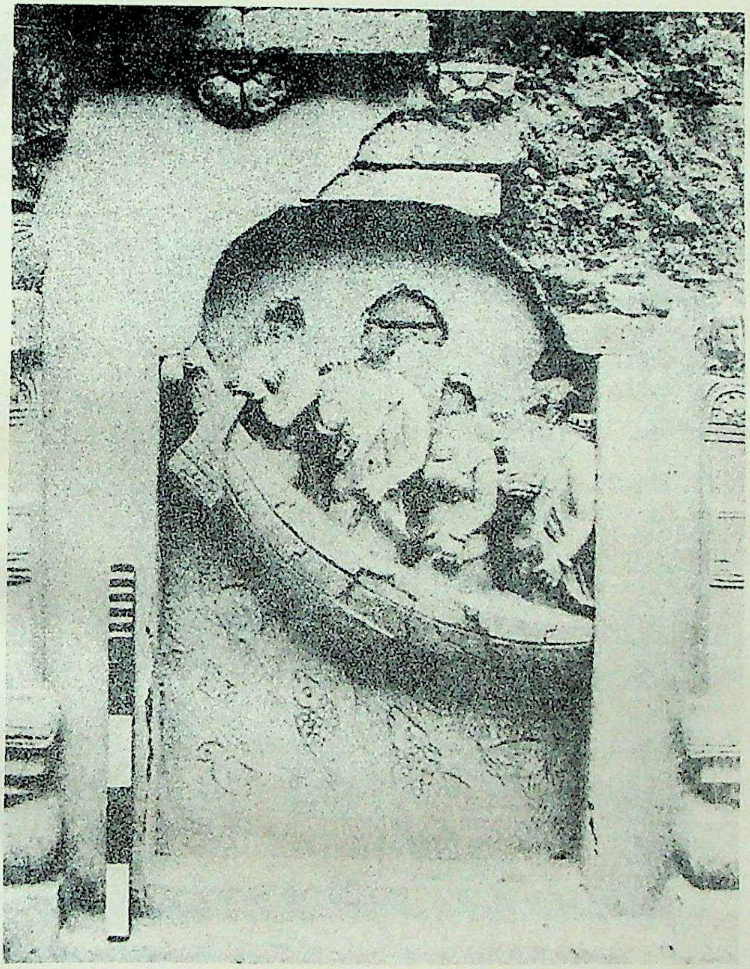

Fig. 1. Crossing of the Ganga by Rāma, Sītā and Lakṣmana with the boatman.

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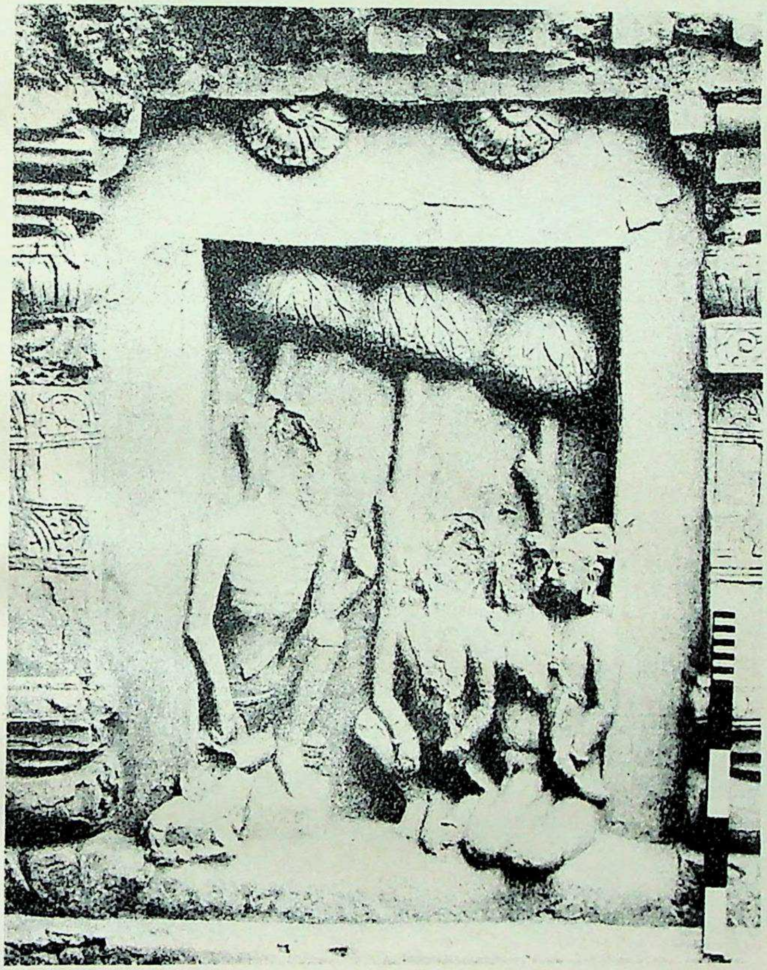

Fig. 2. Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmana squatting on their knees under shaded trees before Maharshi Bhāradwāja.

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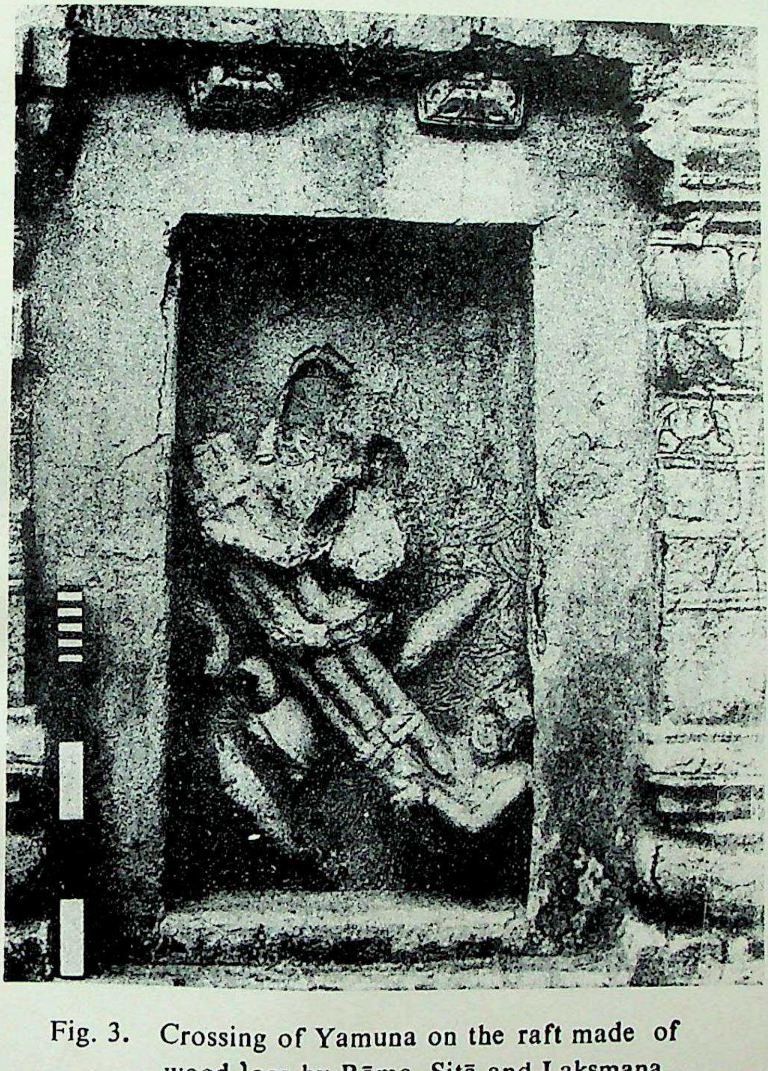

Fig. 3. Crossing of Yamuna on the raft made of wood-logs by Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmana

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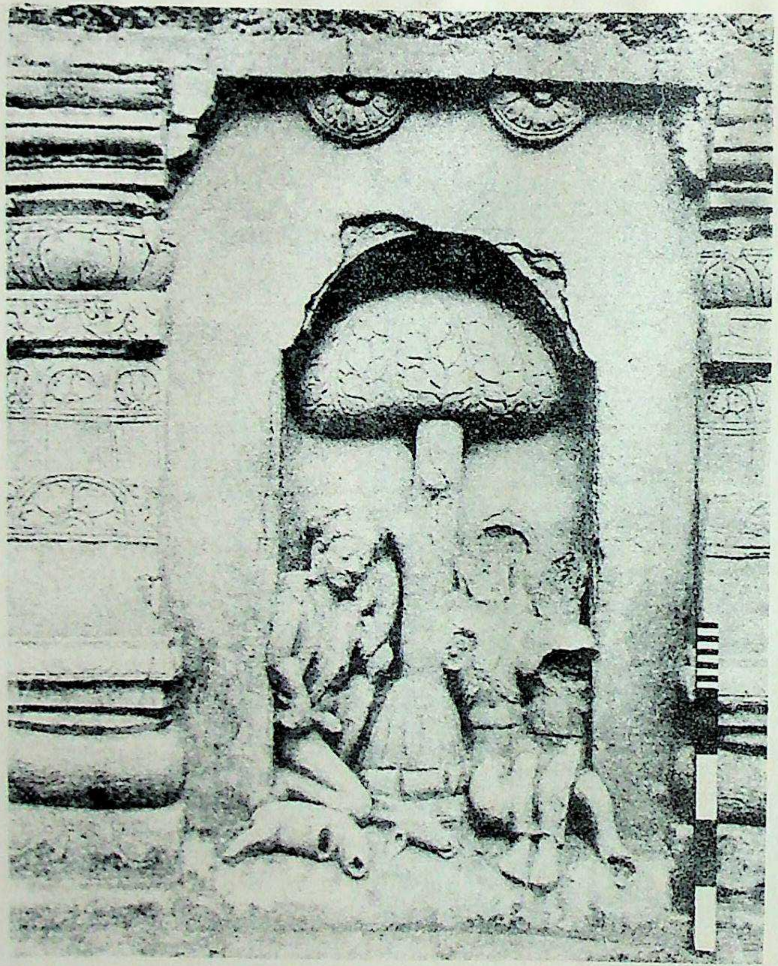

Fig. 4. Rāma with Sitā on his lap and Lakṣmana opposite in Virāsana are taking rest under a shade.

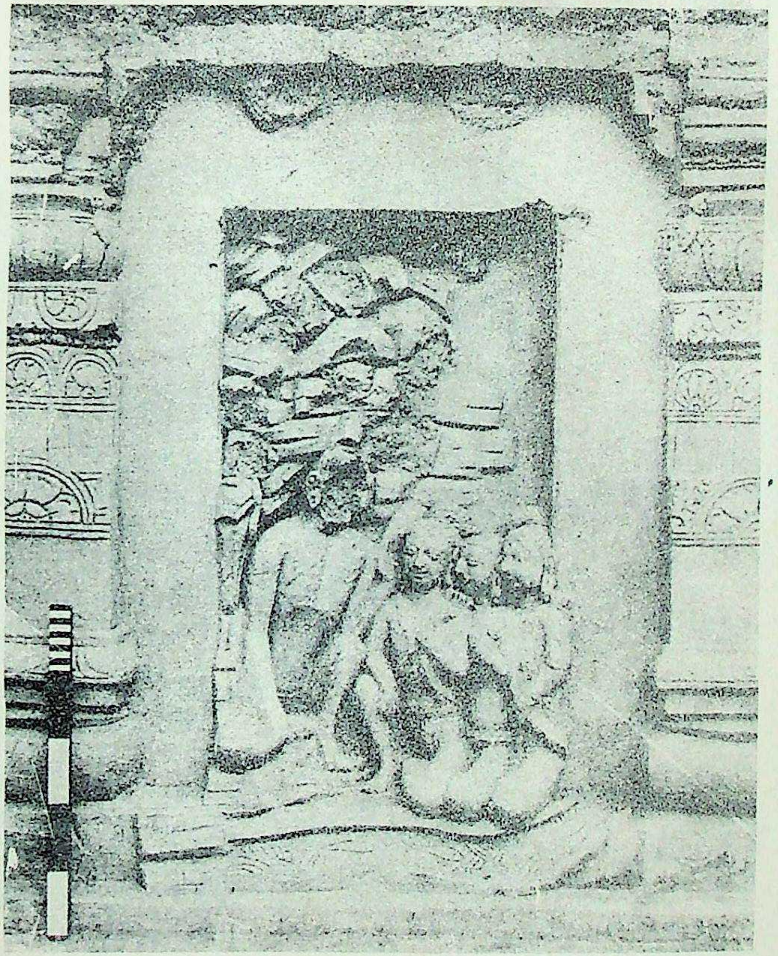

Fig. 5. Rāma, Sitā and Lakṣmana squatting on knees before Vālmiki.

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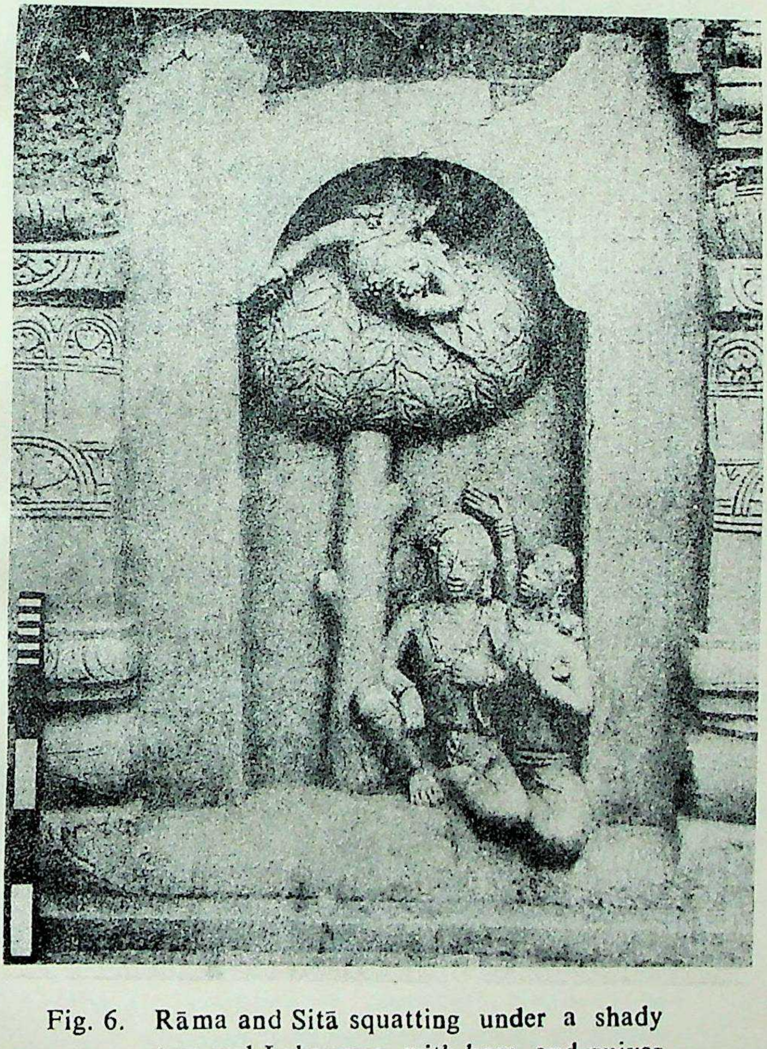

Fig. 6. Rāma and Sitā squatting under a shady tree and Lakṣmana with bow and quiver is sitting on a branch of a tree.

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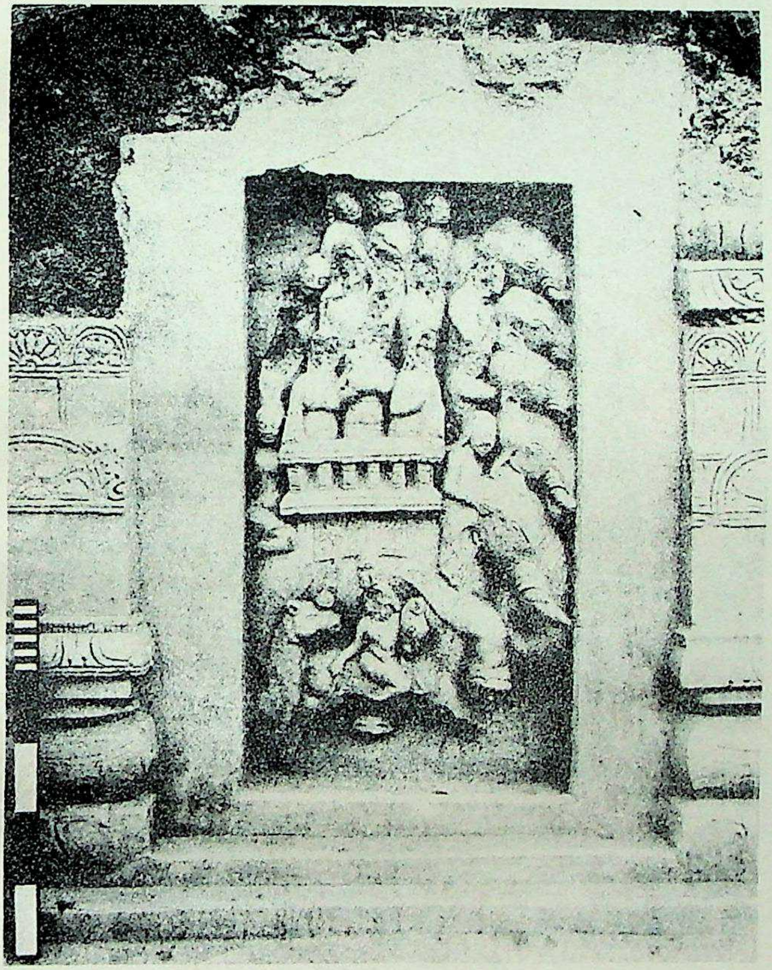

Fig. 7. Procession of caprisoned elephants and horses from Ayodhyā coming to Chītrakuta with Bharata as leader.

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Fig. 8. Bharata falling on his knees before Rāma who embraces him in arms. Sitā and Lakṣman are watching.

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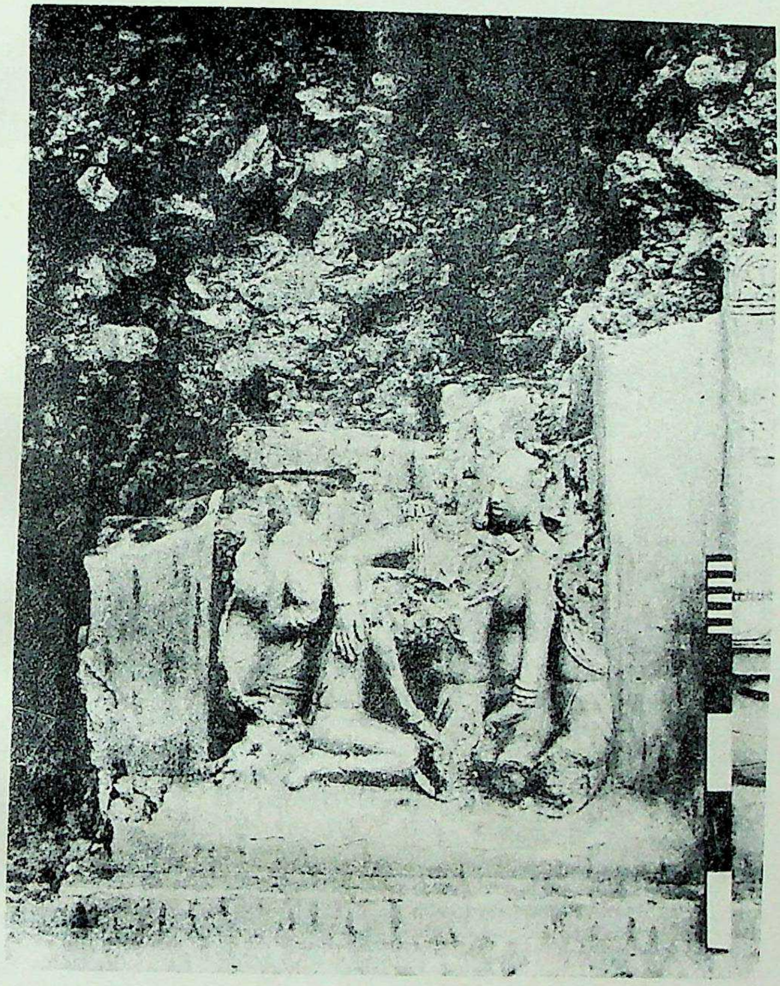

Fig. 8. Bharata falling on his knees before Rāma who embraces him in arms. Sitā and Lakṣman are watching.

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राजस्थान को प्राचीन मूर्तिकला में रामकथा

आर० सी० अग्रवाल, भूतपूर्व निदेशक, पुरातत्व विभाग,
८/१९२ मालवीय नगर जयपुर ३०२०१७

प्राचीन भारतीय शिल्प में रामकथा की अभिव्यक्ति डॉ० प्रियतोष बैनर्जी ने अपने वृहद् ग्रन्थ, 'राम इन इण्डियन लिटरेचर, आर्ट एण्ड थॉट' अंग्रेजी, दिल्ली, १९८६, भाग I–II में सविस्तार रूप से वर्णित की है। इस संदर्भ में राजस्थान की मूर्तिकला भी अपनी महत्त्वपूर्ण भूमिका निभा रही है। जयपुर क्षेत्र में सांभर (प्राचीन शाकम्भरी) से ऐतिहासिक युग की पर्याप्त सामग्री खनन द्वारा प्राप्त हुई है। इनमें एक गुप्त युगीन मृण्मूर्ति में धनुष-बाण लिए व्यक्ति की पहचान करना समीचीन प्रतीत होता है। इस संदर्भ में यह उल्लेखनीय है कि राजस्थान की ही सीमा पर दृषद्वती नदी के कांठे में नचार खेड़ा (Nachāra Kheḍā) से ईसा की ५-६ शती के इष्टिका फलक मिले हैं जिन पर रामकथा के कतिपय दृश्य अंकित हैं और उनकी चौकियों पर संस्कृत भाषा में उनका परिचय भी। हरयाणा के हिसार जिले में नचार खेड़ा से प्राप्त ये अद्वितीय फलक आजकल गुरुकुल संग्रहालय, नरेला (दिल्ली) की शोभा बढ़ा रहे हैं और इनकी नकल में रामकथानक विषयक मृण्मय फलक बनावटी बनाए जाकर विदेशी संग्रहालयों में प्रदर्शित भी हो चुके हैं—इनमें एक पर 'राम' शब्द को फलक पर उकेर भी दिया है ताकि धनुर्धर व्यक्ति को राम बताकर फलक की मौलिकता पर प्रश्न चिह्न न लग सके। 'नचार खेड़ा' के उपर्युक्त फलक (नरेला **संग्रहालय**) वास्तव में उत्तरी भारतीय कला की महत्वपूर्ण निधियाँ हैं। सरस्वती एवं दृषद्वती नदियों की ही उपत्यका में दर्जनों गुप्त कालीन मृण्मूर्तियाँ व फलक राजस्थान के गंगा नगर जिले में रंगमहल, बड़ोपल, मुण्डा, भद्रकाली, पीर-सुल्तान की थेड़ी .... आदि स्थानों पर मिले हैं जिनमें ब्राह्मण धर्म, और विशेषकर कृष्णलीला विषयक अनेक झांकियों का अंकन उपलब्ध है (ललित कला बम्बई अंक ८ में डॉ० शाह व डॉ० अग्रवाल के लेख) परन्तु वहाँ कहीं भी **रामायण एवं रामकथा सम्बन्धी कथानक सर्वथा अदृश्य है**। यह स्थिति क्यों उत्पन्न हुई? विषय अभी गवेष्य है। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि राजस्थान के इस भूभाग में गुप्त काल एवं प्रतिहार युग में कृष्ण भक्ति का प्रभाव अधिक था—इसी कारण ओसियाँ के मन्दिरों पर भी कृष्णलीला कथानक उत्कीर्ण किए गए। राजस्थान की प्रारम्भिक स्थापत्य एवं मूर्तिकला में अभी तक ऐसी सामग्री नहीं मिली है जिससे यह सिद्ध हो सके कि ईसा की ७-८वीं शती तक रामकथानक कला में अभिव्यक्त हुए थे यद्यपि दश अवतार प्रदर्शन में 'राम' का अंकन अवश्य किया जा चुका था। ओसियाँ की कला में यह तनिक बाद में मिलता है।

राजस्थान के नागोर जिले में गोठ मांगलोद के प्रख्यात दधीमाता मन्दिर को १० वीं शती की कृति माना जाता है। यह वास्तव में रामकथा की प्रचुर सामग्री

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अपनी जंघा भाग के ऊपरी भाग की पंक्ति में तीन ओर संजोए हुए है। डॉ० प्रियतोष[1] बैनर्जी ने अपने उपर्युक्त ग्रन्थ में उसका उल्लेख भी किया है और रामकथा सेमीनार में श्रीमती डाक्टर कमल गिरि ने अपने निबन्ध में इन विशेष संदर्भों की ही व्याख्या की है। इनमें मारीच वध, सीता हरण, सेतु बन्ध, बाली-सुग्रीव युद्ध, राम द्वारा बाली बध, लक्ष्मण मूर्छा, राम-रावण युद्ध......आदि कथानक शिल्प द्वारा अभि व्यक्त किए गए हैं। कण्ठी भाग पर रामायण दृश्यों की यह अभिव्यक्ति राजस्थानी शिल्प में अभी तक प्राचीनतम एवं अद्वितीय है। यह भी स्मरण रहे कि यहाँ निज जंघा भाग पर धनुर्धर राम का स्वतन्त्र चित्रण उपलब्ध नहीं है जबकि मध्यकालीन रणछोड़ राय मन्दिर, खेड़ (ज़िला बाड़मेर, राजस्थान) के जंघा भाग में जड़ी स्वतंत्र ताक में द्विबाहु राम की स्वतंत्र मूर्ति जड़ी है, वे धनुष-बाण लिए खड़े हैं। ईसा की ११-१२ वीं शती की कला में राम की यह मूर्ति खजुराहो शिल्प का स्मरण करा देती है जहाँ स्थानक राम व सीता का स्वतंत्र अंकन मन्दिर के बाहर किया गया है। मन्दिर स्थापत्य में राम मूर्ति की स्वतन्त्र प्रस्तुति खेड़ (राजस्थान) की इस मूर्ति द्वारा सुस्पष्ट है। राजस्थान के उदयपुर-क्षेत्र में उदयपुर नगर से १४ मील दूर 'नागदा' के मध्यकालीन मन्दिर विश्वविख्यात हैं। यहाँ सास-बहू नाम के दो देवालय एक ऊँची कुर्सी पर तालाब के किनारे बने हैं, ये १० वीं शती के विष्णु मन्दिर हैं। इन दोनों मन्दिरों का सविशद विवेचन डॉ० सुश्री एग्नेते कुटर (Agnete Kutar) ने अपने शोध निबन्ध (पश्चिम जर्मन विश्वविद्यालय बर्लिन) में प्रस्तुत किया है।[2] नागदा के दोनों मन्दिरों के बाहर जंघा भाग की ऊपरी ताकों में क्रमशः चतुर्भुज बलदेव (पीछे प्रधान ताक में) व बाजू में दाशरथि चतुर्बाहु राम व तथैव आसनस्थ चतुर्बाहु परशुराम की मूर्तियाँ जड़ी हैं। इस तरह रामत्रयी का अंकन किया गया है जो भारतीय मूर्तिविज्ञान की दृष्टि से अनुपम है। राम को भी विष्णु का अवतार मानकर वरदान एवं शंख नीचे के हाथों में और ऊपर के हाथों में धनुष-बाण दिखाई देते हैं।

नागदा के ही प्रधान मन्दिर अर्थात् सास मन्दिर के मण्डप की छत एवं स्तम्भों पर रामायण संदर्भ खोदे गए हैं। बाली-सुग्रीव, संघर्ष, सुग्रीव एवं बाली द्वारा अपनी प्रेयसियों सहित विद्यमानता, राम लक्ष्मण, जटायु वध, सीता हरण, हनुमान द्वारा संजीवनी बूटी लाना आदि कतिपय दृश्य बिना किसी क्रम विशेष के यहाँ पर विद्यमान हैं।[3]

जोधपुर क्षेत्रान्तर्गत केकीन्द[4] (प्राचीन किष्किंधा) का नीलकण्ठ महादेव मन्दिर कला एवं स्थापत्य की दृष्टि से बहुत महत्वपूर्ण है। यहाँ सभा मण्डप की गोल छत के अन्दर वर्तुलाकार भाग रामायण विषयक कई संदर्भ दृष्टिगोचर होते हैं यथा पर्वत को उठाए हनुमान, बानर एवं संजीवनी बूटी प्रस्तुत करते हुए वैद्यराज, सुग्रीव-बाली युद्ध, हाथ जोड़े खड़े हनुमान, जटायु के पास खड़े रामचन्द्र जी, राम द्वारा बाली बध हेतु शरसंधान, स्वर्णमृग आदि आदि।

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जोधपुर जिले के ओसियाँ नामक प्रख्यात एवं जगत प्रसिद्ध स्थल पर मध्यकालीन सचियामाता मंदिर में कुछ रामायण दृश्य उपलब्ध हैं यथा राम-लक्ष्मण को कंधों पर उठाए हनुमान, वानरों द्वारा सेतुबन्ध निर्माण हेतु प्रस्तर शिलाओं को ढोना, अशोक वाटिका में हनुमान द्वारा आम्रभक्षण आदि।[५]

जोधपुर क्षेत्र में ही बाड़मेर जिले के अन्तर्गत (भारत पाकिस्तान सीमा पर) किराडू (प्राचीन किरात कूप) के मध्यकालीन देवालय तत्कालीन चलुक्य स्थापत्य एवं शिल्प की अमर गाथा कह रहे हैं। यहाँ सर्व प्रमुख सोमेश्वर मंदिर के गर्भगृह के बाहर कई रामकथानक पर्याप्त रोचक हैं अर्थात् वानर रूप में प्रस्तुत सुग्रीव-बाली युद्ध, वानरों द्वारा सेतुबन्ध निर्माण जहाँ कई वानर पत्थर उठाकर फेंक रहे हैं। किराडू के ही अन्य लघु मंदिर के बाहर लक्ष्मण को मूर्छित पड़े हुए दर्शाया गया है, उनका सिर राम की जंघा पर रक्खा है और सामने शोकातुर वानर खड़े हैं। अन्यत्र प्रभुसेवक हनुमान सञ्जीवनी बूटी की खोज के अभियान में समूची शिला को ही अनायास उठा लाए हैं।

इसके अतिरिक्त राजस्थान के प्राचीन शिल्प में हनुमान का स्वतन्त्र अंकन भी उल्लेखनीय है। प्राचीन काल में भारत के इस भूभाग में कई मूर्तियाँ पूजा निमित्त बनायी गयी थीं। आज भी राजस्थान के ग्रामों में हनुमान पूजन को सविशेस महत्व प्राप्त है। विक्रम संवत् १३४२ के अचलेश्वर (आबूपर्वत) के शिलालेख में शिव एवं गणेश के साथ साथ हनुमान की भी वन्दना की गयी है।[६] राजस्थान के बाँसवाड़ा जिले में वागड़ के परमारों की राजधानी अर्थूणा (अरत्थूणक) नामक प्रसिद्ध पवित्र स्थल पर हनुमान की मूर्ति आज भी पूजान्तर्गत है, इसकी चरण चौकी पर ६ पंक्तियों का विक्रम संवत् ११६५ (= ११०८ ईसवी) का शिलालेख उत्कीर्ण है जिसमें परमार नरेश विजयराज का उल्लेख किया गया है।[७] सिरोही (राजस्थान) के 'असावा' नामक स्थान पर हनुमान की मूर्ति की प्रतिष्ठा विक्रम संवत् १३५५ (१२९८ ईसवी) में की गयी थी।[८] राजस्थान से प्रतिहार युगीन हनुमान मूर्ति अभी तक प्रकाश में नहीं आयी है जो स्वतंत्ररूपेण पूजा निमित्त निर्मित की गयी हो।

उपर्युक्त विवरण द्वारा राजस्थान के प्राचीन शिल्प में रामकथानकों की संक्षिप्त जानकारी दी गयी है। भावी शोध-खोज द्वारा इस क्षेत्र में अन्य महत्वपूर्ण साक्ष्य सामने आ सकते हैं जिनकी सतत प्रतीक्षा बनी रहेगी।

पादटिप्पणी

१. डॉ० बैनर्जी, भाग २, उपर्युक्त, चित्र संख्या २७६।

२. यह शोध निबन्ध केवल दो मंदिरों पर है और पी० एच० डी० डिग्री हेतु स्वीकृत हो चुका है। इसके निर्देशक हैं डॉ० हर्बर्ट हार्टेल।

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३. द्रष्टव्य सी० मार्ग बन्धु का लेख, एशियन वेरिएण्ट्स इन रामायण (सम्पादक—के०, आर० श्रीनिवास अयङ्गर) साहित्य अकादमी, नयी दिल्ली, १९८३, पृष्ठ १२४-४३। श्री आर० सी० अग्रवाल के भी कतिपय लेख—मैथिली शरणगुप्त अभिनंदन ग्रन्थ पृष्ठ ८५५, इण्डियन हिस्टोरिकल क्वार्टरली, कलकत्ता, वर्ष ३० जून १९५४ पृष्ठ १५६-१५९, ..., भारतीय विद्या, बम्बई, २१ (२), १९५६, पृष्ठ ८२-८३........इत्यादि। प्रियतोष बैनर्जी, उपर्युक्त, पृष्ठ २४९-२५७।

४. जिला नागोर।

५. देवेन्द्र हाण्डा, ओसियां, १९८४, नयी दिल्ली, पृष्ठ ५४, ६१, ८९-९१, ९८, १०१, १३७..........इत्यादि।

६. इण्डियन हिस्टोरिकल क्वार्टरली, कलकत्ता, १९४५, पृष्ठ २८५।

७. गौरीशंकर हीराचंद ओझा, बांसवाड़ा राज्य का इतिहास, अजमेर, १९३९, पृष्ठ १९।

८. ओझा, सिरोही राज्य का इतिहास, १९११, अजमेर पृष्ठ ५४।

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THE RĀMĀYAṆA SCENES ON THE MEDIEVAL COINS

NISAR AHMAD

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No doubt, Banerjea (J. N.) has pondered over the numismatic materials in regards to the study of the development of the Hindu iconography,[1] but emphasis in totality is not given in using this evidence in the reconstruction of the religious history or liberalism embraced by a king; and, more special is the case of those of the medieval period. The eras of the early Mughals, marked the apex of this epoch, characterised vigorousness and multiplicity in the Bhakti movements; and, the Rāma cult edified by Rāmānanda (14th century) of Mithila and popularised by Tulsīdāsa (1532–1623) was one of them. The other founder of the new sect of Rāma worshippers was Dādu in Gujarat who flourished as the later contemporary of Akbar. In South, Tātācharyas (16th century) revived the worship of Rāma. Besides, there was Tukārāma (1608–1649) and Rāmadāsa (1608–1681) in Maharashtra; the former gave stress on *Kīratana* and the latter developed to the construction of the *maṭhas* which were often attached with temples.

The story of Rāma and Sītā uttered by the ascetics exerted a greater influence on the mind of the people in shaping their religious belief; and, its obvious outcome was the wide acceptance of the Rāma cult. The appreciation of this cult by the writer of the *Dabistān*[2] also alludes to its dignified state in the society. Hence the images of Rāma and Sītā were carved out in stone; but they are rarely depicted on the coins. Of course, Hanumāna, who is credited with a significant role in the Rāma-Sītā episode, figures earlier than Rāma and Sītā on the coins of the early medieval period, Chandelas (10th–11th centuries) of Jajākabhukti,[3] the Kalachuris (11th–12th centuries) of Ratanpur[4] and Kadambas (11th century) of

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Hangal.[5] Rāma and sīta, undisputedly, occur for the first time on a few coins of the 16th century which were struck in 1570–71 by Tirumala Rāya of the Vijayanagar Empire and in 1605 by Akbar (1556–1605).

No doubt, Krishna (M.H.) doubtfully identified Rāma on a coin assigned to Someśvara (1235-60) of the Hoyasala dynasty.[6] This is described as follows :

Obv. : Ornamental lion to right.
Rev. : Man standing holding strung bow in his left hand with shaft resting on his shoulder.
Weight : 65 grains.
Size : O. 27".

For the identification of the figure he feels that 'it is either Rāma or Śiva as Kirāṭa, more probably the former'. But the representation is not clear. Even if we accept the identification of the device proposed by him, the portrayal cannot be recognised as Rāma with absolute certainty in the absence of the inscription and his consort or his younger brother Lakshamaṇa, moreso, when we are aware of the occurrence of the Archer on the coins from the ancient time.

Certainly Tirumala Raya I of the Aravidu family, who for the military reasons shifted his capital to Penugonda, and transferred himself and his empire from the protection of god Virupaksha to the care of Śrī Rāma, was the earliest to place Rāma and his associates on his gold coins, called Varāhas.[7] On the variation of the devices and execution they are divided into two types.[8]

Type 1

On the basis of denominations, they are further distinguished into two varieties : (a) Full-Varāhas; and (b) Half-Varāhas.

Variety a

Obv. : Rāma and Sītā are seated on a couch; Lakshmaṇa stands behind in the posture of devotion and holds a bow in

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his right shoulder. Rāma wears a tall *kirīṭa*; and, his right hand is in *abhayamudrā*.

Rev. : Nāgarī legend in three lines with horizontal lines in between :

Śrī Ti
rumalarā
ya lü

Weight : 51.6 grains.
Size : 0.45 inches.

Variety B

Obv. : As above.
Rev. : As above.
Weight : 26.2 grains.
Size : 0.4 inches.

Type 2

Obv. : Very low relief in dotted border similar to variety *a*; but Lakshamaṇa hold bow in his left hand.

Rev. : In dotted border with creeper in front stands Hanumāna to left with hands joined and tail raised up.

Note : The usually low and faint relief may suggest to its manufacture in the different mint.

The obverse device is the scene of the coronation of Rāmachandra at Ayodhya; king Rāma and queen Sītā are seated on the throne and the crown prince Lakshamaṇa stands behind the throne, holding bow, in the posture of devotion. And, these coins in accordance of the motif, were prepared at the eve of the ascend of Tirumala Rāya. The induction of Rāma on the coins of this Vijayanagar king was with the influence of the Vaishnava teachers. The representation of Rāma in *abhaya-mudrā* is the assurance from him to save the kingdom as well as to protect the new capital. The reign of Tirumala Rāya synchronises with the revival of the worship of Rāma in South India under the leadership of the Tātācharyas and, therefore, it can be held that the Rāma-taṅkas of good gold which are

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worshipped in that part of the country were made in the days of Tirumala Rāya.

The Rāma-Sītā type coins struck by Akbar are known three in number; and, all are half denomination pieces. Of them, two are produced in gold[9]; and the third is manufactured in silver[10]. Among the two $\frac{1}{2}$ gold mohar, one belonging to the collection of Prinsep is kept in the British Museum and the other, in the cabinet de France. The $\frac{1}{2}$ rupee, which was acquired by J. K. Agrawal from a pretty dealer of Agra, is presently in the coin-collection of the Bharat Kala Bhavan. The details are as follows :

Gold coins

No 1.

Obv. : A male figure, holding bow in left hand and arrow in right hand is followed by a female figure. Both stand to right. The male figure wears a crown on the head, *dhotī* below the knee and a *paṭkā*, the two ends of which are falling in front and behind, and a long boot. He has quiver containing a sheaf of arrows on his back. The female figure wears *dhotī*. Her left hand draws back the long veil from her face and the right hand rests on hip

Rev. : Within dotted circle and the flowery background.

(Pl. No 1.)

Weight : 74.0 grains.
Size : 0.8 inches.
Collection. Prinsep, British Museum.

No 2.

Obv. : As above, but legend in Devanāgarī characters above the two figures : रामसीय ।
Rev. : As above.

(Pl. No. 2)

Weight & Size : Not known.
Collection : Cabinet de France.

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Silver coin

Obv. : As above, but the figures are shown walking. The male figure does not hold arrow; he wears a *jāmā* coming upto the knees; and, perhaps his feet are devoid of shoes. The female figure wears *dupaṭṭā*, *lahngā* and a close fitting bodice fastened tightly at the waist. She holds probably a bunch of flowers in her left hand and her right hand hangs down.

Rev. : Within plain circle and flowery background.

(Pl. No. 3)

Weight : 81 grains.
Size : 75 inches.
Collection : Bharat Kala Bhavan.

No doubt, Akbar, after the formulation of his own 'Divine Religion' was out of the compass of the Islamic ordinance which prohibited the depiction of the living being in art, yet he represented figures very scarcely on his coins; and, further the attempt in this direction was made late in his reign. Sofar only five such coins are known; and, among them two bears the representation of the birds on one falcon is depicted[10] and on the other, duck[11]. The rest three specimens are those which are referred to here. Indeed, the Falcon type coin was struck at Asir in Isfandārmuz, the 12th month of the 45th Ilāhī era. However, in the month of Farwardin, the first month, of the 50th Ilāhī year, a mint of Akbar coined ½ mohars placing the human figures on one of its sides. Again in the month of Amardād, the 5th month of the same year, ½ rupee piece with the same motif was issued. Thus these coins were struck more than once. It can also be pointed out that the bird-figured coins are full mohars whereas all the present ones are the half denomination pieces; and, this fact suggest them to have been the commomorative issues. Here we can recollect that specimens in the lower denominations were struck by some of the Mughal emperors to scatter or to give them in gift on some special occasions. Certainly the coins under discussion donot contain the name of the place from which they were issued.

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But the obverse inscription in the Awadhī dialect is the indication of their striking spot to have been located in Uttar Pradesh. And, the provenance of the silver coin as Agra can be accounted as the testimony to hold this city as their minting site. In this connection we can recall that the *mohar* bearing the picture of duck was struck at Agra in the month of Khurdād, the third month, of the 50th Ilāhī year.

For the identification of the effigies, Lane-Poole (S) opines that the device adverts to the submission of the king of Bijapur in A.H. 1013 'which was accompanied by the gift of his daughter to the bride of Prince Daniyal, Akbar's son.[12] Smith (V.A.) is not sure in regards to the identification of these portraits, as Danial and his wife, a princess of Bijapur,[13] because the minting year of these coins and the date of matrimony donot correspond with each other. He rightly observes that 'Daniyal died in April 1604 which fell within the year 49, not 50'. He also writes that the latter year began on March 11, 1605.[14] Whitehead (R.B.) truely takes these figures as of Rāma and Sītā.[15] The obverse legend *Rāmasiya* occurring on two coins itself is a strong proof in respect of the recognition of these images. The word *Siya* for Sītā is a dialectical form. The phrase *Rāmasiya* or *Siyārūma* is used in the *Rāmacharitamānasa* (e. g., 'Siyārāma maya *Saba jaga jāni* or *Chita kahai Rāmasiya pada parihari*).[16]

The motive for minting these coins by Akbar in the year (1605) in which he died[17] is explained by Krishna (A.) at length.[18] First he describes the circumstances in which the Rāma-Sītā type coins were minted by Akbar, They are the bad relation of Akbar with Salim, irreligious attitude of Akbar towards Islam and the completion of Tulsīdāsa's *Rāmacharitamānasa* by the 50th Ilahi year (1605, V.S. 1662). Thereafter, he proposes that the Rāma-Sītā type coins were struck to celebrate the 50th Ilāhī year as he had commemorated 1000 year of the Hijrī era after its accomplishment. No doubt, Salim was the source of the great trouble for his father Akbar in his

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last days but this factor cannot be related with the striking of these coins unless we imagine the unhistorical fact of being Salim's strong belief in Islam and the patronage to it for rallying the mullas at his back which led Akbar to coin them in retaliation. Indeed, Akbar had no faith in Islam but it was to the extent of regarding the position of the Prophet.[19] He had highest regard for Allāh, the application of the expression *Allāh-u-Akbar* to him by scholars is a fanciful idea. It is also worth to be noted is that he was *rasūl* (a prophet) and not *al-rasul* (the prophet).[20] Besides, we also know that Akbar had no sole inclination towards Hindu religion; he, as well as, had close association with Jainism, Zorasterism and Christianity. But his coins with the motifs of the other religions are unknown. Further, it is certain that the composition of the *Rāmacharitamānasa* began in 1574 (Chaitra Badi 9, V. S. 1631).[21] But was it completed, after thirty years in 1605 ? Besides, the minting of a few pieces to commemorate the 50th Ilahi year, is also conspicuous.

Undisputedly, the Rāma-Sītā type coins of Akbar are unique; and, there might have been some reason for their striking. We are aware of the travel of Tulsīdāsa from Etah[22] to Varanasi;[23] and the extensive promulgation of the Rāma cult by him obviously resulted in the far and wide spread of it which, in all probability, by the commencement of the 17th century, became a popular cult. And, because of this, it is also likely that Tulsīdāsa, who was in the contact of some of the important Mughal officers, would have been called by Akbar in his court in the end of the 49th or the beginning of the 50th Ilāhī year; and, this event would have been solemnized by minting these pieces in the 50th year of the Ilāhī era. Srivastava (A. L.) holds that 'Tulsidas was not introduced to Akbar'.[24] If it was a fact, howelse the striking of these pieces can be explained ? Here we can also recollect that Akbar got translated the Rāmāyaṇa, besides the other ancient texts; and it was accomplished by Badāyūnī in 1591.[25] It is also worth to be recorded that Akbar placed the religious expression *Allāh-u-*

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Akbar on the bird-figured coins but he eliminated on the present coins; and this is significant. Its cause was the representation of Rāma and Sītā on them as the divine figures; and, therefore, the placement of the above inscription would have been considered as out of context.

Thus we certainly find the Rāmāyaṇa scenes on the coins of Tirumala Rāya of the Vijayanagar Empire and the great Akbar of the Mughal dynasty. On the former, there is the view of the coronation of Rāma. And, on the latter, the stage of Rāma's departure with his wife from Mithila,[26] after their union, is shown; the posture of drawing back the long veil by Sītā from her face and the placement of the crown on the head of Rāma as well as the representation of Sītā following Rāma are the basis for this identification. In can also be mentioned that the coins minted by the Vijayanagar king served as the model for the production of the subsequent Rāma-Taṅkas.

NOTES

1. J. N. Banerjea, *Development of Hindu Iconograph*, pp. 108 ff.
2. He writes that the followers of Rama are purer in character than the devotees of Krishna (*Dabistān*, p. 263).
3. Lallanji Gupal, *Early Medieval Coin-Types of Northern India*, pp. 75–76.
4. Ibid., pp. 73–4.
5. B. D. Chattopadhyaya, *Coins and Currency Systems in South India*, pp. 23 ff.
6. *MASR*, 1929, p. 28.
7. Above, 1931, p. 71.
8. Our Type 2 is not referred to by A. V. Narasimha Murthy (*The Coins of Karnataka*, pp. 168 ff.).
9. *BMC*, *Mughal*, p. 34, pl. V. 172; *PMC*, *Mughal*, p. 431, pl. xxi. ii.
10. *BMC*, p. 33, pl. V. 166.
11. Ibid., p. 34, pl. V. 174.
12. Ibid., p. LXXX.
13. V. A. Smith, *Akbar the Great Mogul*, 1542–1605, p. 312.
14. Ibid., p 313, fn. 2.
15. *PMC*, p xxi.
16. *Kalānidhi*, III, p. 46.

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17. 13th of Jamād-us-Sānī, in A. H. 1014—13th October 1605 (John Briggs, *History of the Rise of the Mahomedan Power in India*, p. 173); 12th Jamād-us-Sānī, 27th Oct. 1605–new style or 17th Oct.–old style (*Akbar the Great Mogul*, p. 313); Midnight of 25–26 Oct. (R. C. Majumdar, ed.) *The Mughul Empire*, p. 169.
18. Kalānidhi, III, pp. 45 ff.
19. The removal of the Kalimā from the coins by Akbar in his thirtieth year hints to the above supposition. It is also said that he rejected the 'observance of the five prayers and the belief in every thing connected with the prophet, as vain superstition' (Abdul-Qadir, Ibn-i-Muluk Shah Al-Badayuni, *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, II, p. 215).
20. *JASB*, XLI, p. 170.
21. A. L Srivastava, *Akbar the Great*, III, p. 92.
22. He was born in the village Rajpur in Etah district.
23. A *ghāṭa* after his name at Varanasi is the evidence of his religious penetration thereat.
24. Op. cit., p. 92.
25. *Muntakhab-ut-Tawārīkh*, I, pp. XVIII, 8, fn. 2; H.M. Elliot and J. Dow son, *The History of India as told by its Historians*, V, p. 478.
26. A S. Altekar takes this scene as going out to forest (*J. N. S. I.* XV, p. 238).

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बिहार की कला में हनुमान

पुष्पा सिन्हा

ज्ञानियों में अग्रगण्य तथा भगवान् राम के अनन्य भक्त श्री हनुमान जी का जीवन भारतीय जनमानस के लिए सदा से प्रेरणादायक रहा है। वे वीरता के साक्षात प्रतिमा एवं शक्ति तथा बल पराक्रम की जीवन्त मूर्ति हैं। भारतीय मल्ल विद्या के हनुमान परमाराध्य इष्ट हैं। कहा जाता है कि हनुमान शंकर के ग्यारहवें रुद्र रूप हैं। भगवान शंकर के अंश से वायु के द्वारा कविराज केसरी की पत्नी अंजना से हनुमान जी का प्रादुर्भाव हुआ है।

आश्विन स्यापिते पक्षं स्वात्यां भौमें च मारूति ।
मेअलग्नेडंजनागमांतु स्वयं जातो हरः निवः ।

अर्थात् आश्विन के कृष्ण पक्ष (वायु पुराण) की चतुर्दशी को स्वाती नक्षत्र और मेघलग्न में माता अंजना के गर्भ से स्वयं भगवान शंकर ही प्रकट हुए। इन्द्र के बज्र के प्रहार से इनकी ठोडी (हनु) पर चोट लगने से वह कुछ टेढ़ी हो गयी, इसी से ये हनुमान कहलाये। इन्होंने साक्षात् सूर्य से व्याकरण की शिक्षा ली थी।[1]

बाल्मीकीय रामायण तथा गोस्वामी तुलसीदास कृत रामचरित मानस में अनेक स्थलों पर इनके नाम का उल्लेख बड़े आदर के साथ हुआ है। इनके जीवन की अनेक घटनाओं में सीता की खोज करना, लंका दहन करना, लक्ष्मण जी को जीवित करने हेतु मृतसंजीवन बूटी लाना, रावण का गर्व नष्ट करना, गरूड़ का गर्व-हरण करना आदि विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय है।

पंचायतन पूजा के प्रसार-प्रचार हो जाने पर हिन्दुओं में अन्य देवी-देवताओं की पूजा भी शुरू हुई। हनुमान भी देव परिवार में पीछे ही सम्मिलित हुए।[2] हिन्दुओं के अन्य देव देवताओं की प्रतिमायें मौर्य शुंग युग से अवश्य बनने लगी थी। किन्तु हनुमान की मूर्ति अपेक्षाकृत बहुत बाद में बनने लगी। राम की पूजा के साथ इनकी भी पूजा बढ़ी तथा समाज में प्रतिमा तैयार होने लगी। श्री हनुमान की अब तक प्राप्त प्राचीन प्रतिमाएँ गुप्तकाल (५वीं-६ठी शताब्दी) की हैं। उत्तर प्रदेश के झांसी जिले में स्थित देवगढ़ के प्रसिद्ध दशावतार-मन्दिर की बाह्य दीवारों पर अनेक पौराणिक कथाओं के दृश्य मिले हैं। यहीं से प्राप्त एक पाषाणखण्ड पर युद्ध में मेघचन्द द्वारा लक्ष्मण के मूर्च्छित हो जाने पर श्री हनुमान मृत-संजीवनी बूटी सहित पर्वत लाते हुए दिखाये गये हैं।

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१. सम्पूर्णानन्द, हिन्दू देव परिवार का विकास पृ० १४८।
२. उपरिवत।

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Hanumāna Antichak, Pala Period

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मध्य प्रदेश के नाचना नामक स्थान से प्राप्त एक शिलाखण्ड पर हनुमान सुग्रीव के साथ श्री राम के सामने खड़े और श्रीराम के पीछे लक्ष्मण जी स्थित हैं।

इनकी एक महाकाय मूर्ति मीरा में मिली है। इसमें हनुमान वीरभाव में प्रदर्शित हैं। वीरभाव बड़े ही प्रभावोत्पादक ढंग से दिखाया गया है। यह लाल बलुए पत्थर की बनी है तथा कलात्मक दृष्टिकोण से आठवीं शती ई० की है। मध्य प्रदेश के गुना जिले में इन्दौर में हनुमान जी की एक विशाल प्रतिमा सुरक्षित है। मूर्ति की चरण-चौकी पर उत्कीर्ण लेख से ज्ञात होता है कि मूर्ति का निर्माण काल नवीं ई० में हुआ था।

खजुराहो में हनुमान की दो-तीन स्वतन्त्र मूर्तियाँ उपलब्ध हैं। इनमें एक में इन्हें लम्बी वनमाला पहने उत्कीर्ण किया गया है।[1] इनके मात्र दो हाथ हैं। इनकी लम्बी लांगूल ऊपर की ओर मुड़कर इनके सिर पर है। यहाँ स्वतंत्र मूर्ति के अतिरिक्त शिलापट्ट पर श्रीराम और सीता के साथ हनुमान दिखाये गये हैं। उड़ीसा में कटक जिले के मणिकेश्वर मन्दिर पर, जो लगभग ७वीं शती ई० में निर्मित हुआ था श्रीराम, लक्ष्मण एवं हनुमान की अत्यन्त सुन्दर मूर्तियाँ बनी हैं। उत्तर भारत के प्रतिहार सम्राटों के शासन काल में श्री हनुमान की पूजा के निमित्त अनेक पाषाण प्रतिमाएँ बनी हैं। आठवीं शती ई० में चित्तौड़गढ़ में बनी एक मूर्ति अब राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय, नई दिल्ली में सुरक्षित है।

उत्तर भारत की तरह दक्षिण भारत में श्री हनुमान की पूजा समान रूप से प्रचलित थी। मट्टड़कल एवं बेलूर से हनुमान की पाषाण मूर्तियाँ मिली हैं। पाषाण के अतिरिक्त कांस्य की बनी मूर्तियाँ भी दक्षिण भारत से मिली हैं। तंजौर जिले में षडक्कुपणपुर नामक स्थान की मूर्ति अधिक महत्वपूर्ण है। मद्रास संग्रहालय में हनुमान हाथ में ताड़पत्रीय पाण्डुलिपि लिए हाथ जोड़कर वन्दना करते दिखाये गये हैं।

प्राचीन मुद्राओं पर भी हनुमान का अंकन मिलता है। कलचुरि नृपति कलिंगराज अथवा उनके पुत्र कालराज ने श्री हनुमान मुद्रा की परम्परा एकादश शती में प्रारंभ की तथा यह परंपरा आगे भी कायम रही। इसी प्रकार चन्देल राजमुद्राओं पर भी श्री हनुमान का अंकन है।

भारत के बाहर भी हनुमान की मूर्तियाँ प्रकाश में आयी हैं। उनमें श्याम, कम्बोडिया, जावा, सुमात्रा, नेपाल आदि स्थानों में विशेष रूप से उल्लेखनीय है।

अन्य स्थानों की भाँति बिहार में भी हनुमान की मूर्ति राम, लक्ष्मण के साथ गुप्तकाल से बनने लगी। इसी प्रकार का एकमृण्मूर्ति कलक चौता[2] (भोजपुर)

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१. अवस्थो, रामाश्रय, खजुराहो की देब प्रतिमाएं, पृ०-११४ मुर्ति संख्या ३८।

२. विस्तृत अध्ययन के लिए देखें, बिहार की प्राचीन मूर्ति कला में हनुमान, "वरदा अंक ३ की वर्ष १५, १९७२, कल्याण हनुमान अंक वर्ष ४९ में स्थापत्य एवं मूर्ति कला में श्री हनुमान, मूर्तिकला में श्री हनुमान का संकट मोचन रूप, राजमुद्राओं पर श्री हनुमदाकृति का अंकन।

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से मिला है। इसमें राम-लक्ष्मण तथा अन्य वानरों के साथ हनुमान भी चित्रित किये गये हैं। हनुमान की मुखाकृति बहुत ही क्रुद्ध है। संभवतः ये सभी सीताहरण के प्रति अपनी प्रतिक्रिया प्रकट कर रहे हैं। कथा का बहुत ही परिष्कृत चित्रण हुआ है।[1] अन्तिचक (भागलपुर) की खुदाई में अन्य मृण्मूर्तियों के साथ हनुमान की भी दो स्वतन्त्र मूर्तियाँ मिली हैं।[2] दोनों प्रतिमाएँ मानवाकृति हैं। मूर्ति के ललाट, आँख, नाक सुन्दर बने हैं। दोनों के एक ही अभिप्राय हैं। एक हाथ में पर्वत लिये दिखाये गये हैं। कलात्मक दृष्टिकोण से ये ९वीं-१०वीं शती की हैं। पर्वत उठाये हुए हनुमान का चित्रण कलाकारों का प्रिय विषय रहा है। और इस आशय की मूर्तियाँ सम्पूर्ण भारतवर्ष में मिली हैं। अन्तिचक की मूर्तियाँ सम्प्रति प्राचीन इतिहास एवं पुरातत्व विभाग, पटना विश्वविद्यालय के संग्रहालय में सुरक्षित हैं।

इस प्रकार हम देखते हैं कि हनुमान की पूजा न केवल सम्पूर्ण भारतवर्ष में ही थी, अपितु नेपाल और जावा तक भी उसका प्रसार हुआ। आज भी भारत के प्रत्येक नगर एवं गाँव में श्री हनुमान का मन्दिर अवश्य बना है।

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१. पटना म्युजियम केटलग ऑफ एन्टिक्विटीज प्लेट ४८, चित्र संख्या १५।

२. जर्नल ऑफ दी बिहार रिसर्च सोसाइटी, ५७ चित्र संख्या ११।

३. अन्तिचक प्राचीन विक्रमशिला महाविहार का स्थान माना जाता है। यहाँ उत्खनन में एक स्तूप के चारों ओर मृण्मूर्तियाँ उत्कीर्ण मिली हैं। इनमें हिन्दू एवं बौद्ध दोनों धर्मों की मूर्तियाँ सम्मिलित हैं। इस प्रसिद्ध बौद्ध बिहार में हनुमान तथा अन्य हिन्दू देवताओं की प्रतिमा धार्मिक सहनशीलता तथा समवाय का उदाहरण है।

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मध्यकालीन मूर्तिकला में हनुमान और रावण

नीलकण्ठ पुरुषोत्तम जोशी

सी० के० १/१३, भोसला मन्दिर, वाराणसी

कला के क्षेत्र में हनुमान का विचार करते समय सर्वप्रथम हमारा ध्यान महभारत के उद्योग पर्व के उन श्लोकों की ओर जाता है जिनमें हनुमान की प्रतिकृति का उल्लेख है। प्रसंग है—अर्जुन के रथ के निर्माण की कथा। संजय दुर्योधन से कहता है कि त्वष्टा, ब्रह्मा और इन्द्र ने मिलकर अर्जुन के रथ की ध्वजा में अनेक रूपों की रचना की है। उन छोटी बड़ी मूर्तियों के बीच हनुमान भी भीमसेन के अनुरोध की रक्षा करने के लिये अपनी प्रतिकृति रखेंगे[1]। इस उल्लेख का तिथि निश्चय तो नहीं किया जा सकता, पर यह हनुमद्मूर्ति की प्राचीन परंपरा की ओर संकेत अवश्य करता है।

मूर्तिकला के क्षेत्र में हनुमान के अंकन दो प्रकार से प्राप्त होते हैं—एक तो रामायण के कथादृश्यों में और दूसरे उनकी स्वतंत्र मूर्तियों के रूप में। रामकथा के दृश्यों में तो हनुमान का अंकन ई० सन् की पाँचवी—छठीं से ही आरंभ हो गया था। देवगढ़ (नि० ललितपुर, उ० प्र०) के दशावतार मंदिर की बाह्य भित्तियों पर हनुमान का राम से मिलना, बाली-सुग्रीव युद्ध को देखना, द्रोणाचल लाना आदि दृश्य बने थे। नचना (म० प्र०) से प्राप्त एक शिलाखण्ड पर राम-लक्ष्मण-सुग्रीव के साथ हनुमान की उपस्थिति दिखलाई गई है। यही दृश्य सिंगरौर (शृंगवेरपुर) से भी मिला है (इलाहाबाद सं० २६१)। वाराणसी से प्राप्त एक गुप्त कालीन फलक (भारत कला भवन सं० १६५) पर सेतुबन्ध के दृश्य में हनुमान विद्यामान हैं। चौसा (बिहार) से प्राप्त गुप्तकालीन मृद्फलकों पर भी हनुमान के दर्शन होते हैं।

गुप्तकाल के बाद तो रामकथा के दृश्य अनेक स्थानों से मिले हैं, जिनपर हनुमान के दर्शन होते हैं, और आजतक अविच्छिन्न रूप से होते आरहे हैं।

जहाँ तक हनुमान की स्वतंत्र प्रतिमा की बात है, हमारी जानकारी के अनुसार उनकी कोई मूर्ति आठवीं शताब्दि के पूर्व की ज्ञात नहीं है, जिसका पूजनार्थ

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१. ध्वजे हि तस्मिन्रूपाणि चक्रुस्ते देवमायया
महाधनानि दिव्यानि महान्ति च लघूनि च।
भीमसेनानुरोधाय हनूमान्मारुतात्मजाः
आत्मप्रतिकृतिं तस्मिन् ध्वजे आरोपयिष्यति ॥
—महाभारत, उद्योग० ५६. ८–९ (गीताप्रेस प्रति पृ० २२२८)

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प्रयोग होता रहा हो। इस दृष्टि से लखनऊ संग्रहालय की प्रतिहार कालीन अर्ध-खण्डित, किन्तु फिर भी अत्यन्त सुन्दर मूर्ति (छ० सं० सं० ५१-८७) को प्राचीनतम मानना होगा। यहाँ हनुमान की कीर्तिमुख से अलंकृत केशराशि, गले में पड़ी वनमाला और वक्षस्थल पर विराजमान श्रीवत्स चिह्न विशेषरूप से उल्लेखनीय हैं। आठवीं शती की एक दूसरी प्रतिमा भी हमें ज्ञात है, जो राजस्थान के चित्तौड़-गढ़ में बनी थी और अब राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय, नई दिल्ली में विद्यमान है। इसके बाद एक अभिलेख युक्त प्रतिमा का उल्लेख करना होगा। हर्ष संवत् ३१६ (सन् ९२२) की बनी खजुराहो (म० प्र०) में स्थापित इस मूर्ति में हनुमान आलीढ मुद्रा में खड़े हैं। वायें पैर के नीचे एक पुरुष है। उनका दाहिना हाथ ऊपर की ओर उठा है तथा बाँया वक्षस्थल पर रखा है। गले में लम्बी वनमाला है। इसी काल के लगभग की एक अन्य विशाल प्रतिमा इन्दौर (म० प्र०) के केन्द्रीय संग्रहालय (सं० सं० ...., AIIS Neg. No. 322 18) में प्रदर्शित है। इसके दोनों हाथ तो खण्डित हैं, पर मूलरूप में दाहिना स्पष्ट ऊपर की ओर उठा था। कमरबंद से एक छूरी लटक रही है, बाँये पैर से राक्षस कुचला जा रहा है और बगल में एक बानर सेवक खड़ा है। इस प्रतिमा की विशेषता उसके पुच्छलाङ्छन में है। हनुमान की लम्बी लांगूल एक सुन्दर केशवाले पुरुष को कमर से कुण्डलित करते हुए भूमि पर लोटती सी दिखलाई पड़ती है। उससे कुण्डलित होने वाला पुरुष कोई शत्रु नहीं अपितु सेवक है। प्रसन्न मुद्रा में वह दोनों हाथों से अपने स्वामी के पुच्छ को पकड़े खड़ा है, किसी भी प्रकार पीड़ित होने का भाव नहीं है। इसीलिये उसकी पहचान भी सरल नहीं है। एक संभावना विचारणीय है। गुप्तकाल से मुख्यमूर्ति के आयुधों को पुरुष या स्त्री रूप में अंकित करने की पद्धति चल पड़ी थी। तदनुसार मूर्तिकला में चक्र, शंख, गदा, पद्म, त्रिशूल, खट्वांग, वज्र, चाप, बाण, शक्ति, घण्टा आदि के मानवाङ्कन हमें मिल चुके हैं। हनुमान का मुख्य आयुध—प्रहार शक्ति केन्द्र—उनका पुच्छ था जिसका इच्छानुसार वे खुलकर प्रयोग करते थे। आयुध-पुरुषों के अंकन की परिपाटी के परिप्रेक्ष्य में हनुमान के पुच्छ को दोनों हाथों में धारण करने वाला यह सुन्दर एवं प्रसन्न मानव 'लांगूल पुरुष' या 'पुच्छ पुरुष' तो नहीं है। हो सकता है, पर इसे तथ्यरूप में स्वीकार करने के पूर्व हमें अन्य पुष्ट प्रमाणों की प्रतीक्षा करनी होगी।

कलचुरि, चेदि, गहडवाल और चन्देलों के समय हनुमत्-प्रतिमा एवं पूजन की लोकप्रियता बहुत बढ़ जाती है। इस काल की कई प्रतिमाएँ हमें ज्ञात हैं। झाँसी के राजकीय संग्रहालय में स्थापित ललितपुर (म० प्र०) के सिरोन खुर्द से मिली दो मूर्तियाँ (सं० मं० ८१.१७५, ८१.९९), कालिंजर के हनुमान कुण्ड के निकट पर्वत को काटकर बनाई हुई विशाल प्रतिमा, कलचुरीकाल में भेड़ाघाट के गोलकी मठ में स्थित हनुमान, प्रयाग संग्रहालय की गहडवालों के समय की खण्डित पर विशाल मूर्ति (ई० सं० सं० १०७९) आदि कई उदाहरण गिनाये जा सकते हैं।

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इन सभी मूर्तियों के आधार पर लगभग दसवीं से बारहवीं शती के बीच के हनुमद्विग्रह के निम्नांकित प्रतिमा लक्षण स्थिर किये जा सकते हैं—

(अ) आलीढ या प्रत्यालीढ मुद्रा में खड़े द्विभुज मारुती का दाहिना हाथ मस्तक के ऊपर उठा हुआ रहता है। हथेली खुली रहती है, मानों चपेटाधान करने की तैयारी हो।

(आ) कमरबंद या मेखला से एक छूरी लटकती रहती।

(इ) हनुमान का बाँया हाथ वक्षस्थल पर तर्जनी या वितर्क मुद्रा में दिखलाई पड़ता है। बहुधा हनुमान का मुख फैला हुआ (विवृतास्य) है।

(ई) वे अपने उठे हुए बाँये पैर से राक्षस या कभी-कभी कँकाली राक्षसी को कुचलते रहते हैं। इस राक्षसी की अभी पहचान नहीं हुई है। कदाचित वह लङ्का की नगरदेवता लङ्किनी हो। इसे हनुमान ने सीता की खोज के समय नगरद्वार पर ही पराभूत किया था।

अगली शताब्दियों में हनुमत्पूजन की लोकप्रियता में कोई कमी नहीं आयी। मूर्तियाँ तो हैं ही, अभिलेखीय प्रमाण भी विद्यमान हैं। उदाहरणार्थ राजस्थान के बाँसवाडा से लगभग तीस मील दक्षिण पश्चिम में हनुमान गढ़ी के देव विग्रह पर संवत् ११६५ (सन् ११०८) का परमार शासक विजय राज के समय का नौ पंक्तियों का लेख उत्कीर्ण है। इसी प्रकार हरसूद (म० प्र०) से मिले संवत् १२५५ (सन् ११९८) के एक लेख में एक व्यापारी द्वारा हनुमद्स्थापना किये जाने का उल्लेख है।

कलाकृतियों में हनुमान का विचार करते समय हम कलचुरी और चन्देल राजाओं के सिक्कों को नहीं भूल सकते जिन पर हनुमान के दर्शन होते हैं। ग्यारहवीं शताब्दि में रत्नपूर छत्तीसगढ़ के कलचुरी शासक कलिंगराज, कमलराज, जाजल्लदेव प्रथम और पृथ्वीदेव ने मुद्राओं पर हनुमान का अंकन कराया। पृथ्वीदेव की मुद्राओं पर तो चतुर्भुज हनुमान हैं जो हाथ में गदा लेकर राक्षसों का दमन कर रहे हैं। चन्देल नृपतियों में इस पद्धति का आरम्भ सल्लक्षण वर्मा ने किया और जयवर्मा, पृथ्वीवर्मा और मदनवर्मा ने उसका अनुसरण किया। दक्षिण भारत में यादव राजाओं ने अपनी राजमुद्रा पर हनुमान के साथ गरुड़ को भी अंकित किया है। कदम्ब और होयसल नरेशों ने हनुमान को राज चिह्न के रूप में स्वीकार किया था। पाण्डयों की मुद्राएँ हनुमानाङ्कित हैं। विशेष बात तो यह है कि अर्काट के मुसलमान शासक नवाब महम्मद अली वलना ने भी हनुमच्चिह्न का उपयोग किया है।

सत्रहवीं शताब्दि में महाराष्ट्र के सन्त समर्थ रामदास स्वामी ने तथा उत्तर भारत में उसके बाद गोस्वामी तुलसीदास जी ने मारुती उपासना के प्रचार का मानों बीड़ा ही उठाया था। मूर्तिकला की दृष्टि से इन शताब्दियों में हनुमान के विविध रूप सामने आते हैं, यथा—

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(१) वीर मारुति—

चन्देल परम्परा के हनुमान वैसे तो वीर हनुमान ही हैं पर सत्रहवीं शती में पहुँचते-पहुँचते एक हाथ में गदा और दूसरे में द्रोणाचल को लेकर आलीढ मुद्रा में स्थित हनुमान वीर मारुति के नाम से पहचाने जाने लगे थे। अब यह प्रकार किंचित परिवर्तनों के साथ अत्यधिक लोकप्रिय हो चुका है। कहीं-कहीं द्रोणाचल नहीं होता अपितु मध्यकालीन परम्परा के अनुसार उनका दाहिना हाथ ऊपर उठा रहता है, मानों चपेटाघात करने ही वाले हो।

वाराणसी स्थिति एक प्रतिभा में तो गदाधारी हनुमान को भरत द्वारा बाण मारे जाने की कथा भी अंकित है।

दास मारुति—

नमस्कार मुद्रा में खड़े हनुमान दासमारुति कहलाते हैं। महाराष्ट्र में नागपूर की ओर यह स्वरूप अधिक लोकप्रिय रहा है।

राम सेवक मारुति—

उपरोक्त दोनों प्रकारों में कभी-कभी हनुमान के कंधों पर राम-लक्ष्मण विराजमान दिखलाई पड़ते हैं।

चतुर्भुज हनुमान—

लखनऊ संग्रहालय की एक धातुमूर्ति में (सं० सं० ४० १३८) लगभग पद्मासन में स्थित हनुमान के घुटने योग पट्ट से बंधे हैं, दोनों साधारण हाथ नमस्कार मुद्रा में जुड़े हैं, परन्तु पिछले दो अतिरिक्त हाथों में चक्र और शंख के दर्शन होते हैं।

विस्मय मुद्रा में हनुमान--

दक्षिण भारत की एक सुप्रसिद्ध धातुमूर्ति में, जो उत्तर चौल काल की है और अब विदेश में है—हनुमान अपने दाहिने हाथ की उँगलियों को आश्चर्य से मुख पर रखे खड़े हैं।

पञ्चमुख हनुमान—

राजस्थान में जोधपुर दुर्ग के बाहर पहाड़ में काटकर बनी लगभग १८ फीट ऊँची हनुमान की पंचमुखी प्रतिमा दर्शनीय है। इस प्रकार की एक चतुर्भुज मूर्ति गुजरात राज्य के तलना नामक स्थान से मिली है। इनमें सिंह, वानर, गरुड़, शूकर तथा ऊपर अश्व के मुख हैं। वाराणसी में भी पञ्चमुखी हनुमान का मन्दिर विद्यमान है।

विद्यार्णव तन्त्र के पञ्चमुख हनुमत्प्रकरण में प्राप्त वर्णनानुसार पञ्चमुख हनुमान का पूर्व दिशा का मुख बानर का है, दक्षिण की ओर का सिंह का, पश्चिम की ओर

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गरुड़ का, तथा पाँचवाँ ऊर्ध्वमुख है जो अश्व का है। स्पष्ट है कि गुजरात वाली मूर्ति इस तान्त्रिक ध्यान से मेल खाती है।

पञ्चमुख हनुमान के मुखों की रचना पर थोड़ा विचार करते ही लगता है कि इस प्रकार की रचना का मूलाधार कदाचित प्राचीन वैकुण्ठ विष्णु की मूर्तियाँ हैं। गढ़वा से प्राप्त एक गुप्त कालीन वैकुण्ठ मूर्ति (ल० सं० सं०) में दाहिनी ओर सिंह, बाँयी ओर वराह और सिर के ऊपर अश्वमुख का अभाव है, मध्यमुख मानव का है। मथुरा से प्राप्त एक अन्य समकालीन वैकुण्ठ (म० सं० सं० ४२-४३—२९८९) प्रतिमा में भी यही व्यवस्था है, केवल ऊर्ध्वमुख या अश्वमुख का अभाव है। गुप्तकालीन वैकुण्ठ मूर्तियों में पिछला मुख नहीं दिखलाई पड़ता, जो कश्मीर की मध्यकालीन कला में राक्षस मुख के रूप में प्रगट होता है। खजुराहो संग्रहालय में प्रदर्शित एक चन्देल कालीन वैकुण्ठमूर्ति में यही पिछला मुख अश्व का है। इस प्रकार यह बात स्पष्ट होती है कि वैकुण्ठ विष्णु के मानवमुख के स्थान पर हनुमान का सहज मुख अर्थात् बानरमुख स्थापित किया गया, सिंह, वराह और अश्व वैसे ही रहे, पीछे की ओर गरुड़ का मुख आया, और पञ्चमुख हनुमान की निर्मिति की गई। मध्यकालीन वैष्णव परिकर देवताओं में हनुमान और गरुड़ का नैकट्य विद्यमान है।

रावण

रामायण कथा दृश्यों के अतिरिक्त कुछ अन्य कथा प्रसंगों में भी हमें कला के क्षेत्र में रावण के दर्शन होते हैं। मुख्य कथा है रावणानुग्रह की। लंका को शिव-पार्वती से सुशोभित करने की इच्छा से रावण का उन दोनों के सहित समूचे कैलास पर्वत को हाथों से उठा लेने का प्रयत्न करना, शिव का अपने अंगूठे से कैलास को दबाना, फलस्वरूप रावण का अतिरिक्त भार से दबकर हतगर्व होना और वीणा बजाकर शिव का स्तवन करना इस कथा के महत्त्व के बिन्दु हैं। रावणानुग्रह की कथा का कला में अंकन गुप्तकाल से आरम्भ होकर मध्यकाल की समाप्ति तक अक्षुण्ण रूप से चलता है। इन अंकनों में हमें रावणके कई रूपों के दर्शन होते हैं। आज हम उन्हीं की संक्षेप में चर्चा करेंगे।

रावणानुग्रह मूर्ति का कदाचित प्रथम प्रारंभिक अंकन हमें मथुरा से प्राप्त एक शिलाखण्ड (म० सं० से० ३५-२५७७) पर मिलता है। यहाँ रावण को स्थूलशरीर और विकृतमुख राक्षस के रूप में अंकित किया गया है। मस्तक एक ही है और हाथ केवल दो।

मध्यकाल में रावणानुग्रहमूर्ति की लोकप्रियता काफी बढ़ गई। शिव-पार्वती के आसन के नीचे रावण के निम्नांकित रूप दिखलाई पड़ते हैं—

(१) एक मुख चतुर्भुज रावण – पिछले दो हाथों से वह कैलास को उठाने का प्रयास कर रहा है, पर अगले दो हाथों से वह वीणा बजा रहा है। (इलाहाबाद सं० केटलाग ४२६, रानीमहल झाँसी संग्रह सं० २१,३४,३६)।

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(२) एक मुख द्विभुज रावण—इस प्रकार में वीणा नहीं होती। वह अपने बाँये हाथ से शिव-पार्वती का आसन उठाने का प्रयत्न कर रहा है, तथा बाँये में तलवार धारण किये है। (रानी महल, झाँसी संग्रह सं० ६२)।

(२) (अ) वही प्रकार किन्तु अगल बगल नमस्कार मुद्रा में एक स्त्री विद्यमान है (भोपरदेव मंदिर, राजनांदगाव, महाराष्ट्र)।

(३) एक मुख षड्भुज रावण—पिछले दो हाथों से कैलासोत्थापन, बीचवाले दो में से एक में ढाल और दूसरे से विरोधी शिवगण की टांग खींचना, साधारण दाहिने में खड्ग बाँया जानुविन्यस्त—यह स्थिति रावण के इस रूप में दृष्टिगोचर होती है (छ० सं० सं० जी० २२१)।

(४) तीन मुखों वाला चतुर्भुज या षडभुज रावण—यहाँ रावण के हाथों में तलवार और वीणा दोनों के ही दर्शन होते हैं।

(५) दशानन रावण—रावण का दशानन रूप मध्यभारतीय कला में कम मिलता है, पर उसका प्रारंभ गुप्तकाल से हो जाता है। देवगढ़ (ललितपुर, उ० प्र०) के स्थानीय संग्रहालय में सुरक्षित एक चैत्य गवाक्ष में रावण द्वारा अपने मस्तकों को काटकर शिवपूजन संपन्न करने की कथा का अंकन है। यहाँ पर शिवलिंग के सम्मुख पड़े ६ शिर तो स्पष्ट हैं, और भी होंगे।

हिंगलानगढ़ (मंदसोर, म० प्र०) से मिली रावणानुग्रहमूर्ति में, जो अब केन्द्रीय संग्रहालय, इन्दौर में विद्यमान है, पंचमुखी रावण दिखलाई पड़ता है उसके पीछे की ओर के पाँचमुखों को जो अदृश्य हैं—मिलाने पर दस की संख्या पूरी हो जाती है। ऐसा ही रावण एलोरा की प्रसिद्ध रावणानुग्रहमूर्ति में भी दृष्टिगोचर होता है।

रावण का रासभमुख—

रावण के दसमुखवाली बात तो साहित्य से परिपुष्ट है, पर उसके एक अन्य मुख के विषय में साहित्य मौन है। यह है उसका रासभया गर्दभमुख। कला में रावण के सामान्य मुखों के ऊपर उसका अंकन हुआ है। इसका ठेठ गुप्त कालीन उदाहरण एक उस काल का मृद्फलक है, जो इस समय राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय, नई दिल्ली में सुरक्षित है। ढलते गुप्तकाल का दूसरा नमूना मूसानगर (घाटमपुर तहसील कानपुर, उ० प्र०) से प्राप्त एक रावणानुग्रह प्रतिमा में मिलता है, जिसका अब केवल अधोभाग ही अवशिष्ट है। इसे लेखक ने वहीं मुक्तादेवी के मन्दिर में देखा था।

कलचुरी, चन्देल और गहडवाल कालीन रावणानुग्रह प्रतिमाओं में यह कई स्थानों पर देखा जा सकता है। रानी दुर्गावती संग्रहालय, नवालपुर में एक ऐसी

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भी मूर्ति है जिसमें रावण के मस्तक पर केवल रासभमुख ही नहीं, अपितु अपने अगले पैरों को ऊपर उठाये पूरा आवक्ष गधा के बनाया गया है।

गर्दभमुखयुक्त रावण का अंकन राजस्थानी चित्रकला में भी मिलता है। आज भी उत्तरप्रदेश में विजयादशमी के अवसर पर राम द्वारा वधार्थ निर्मित रावण के बृहत्काय पुतलों पर गदहे का मुख बना रहता है। यही नहीं रामलीला के लिये प्रयोग में लाये जाने वाली रावण की मुखावली में इसके दर्शन होते हैं।

कला के क्षेत्र में दृष्टिगोचर होने वाली रावण के रासभमुखवाली लम्बी परंपरा का साहित्यिक आधार मुझे अब तक नहीं मिला है। श्री शिवराममूर्ति जी ने रावण के रासभ मस्तक को उसकी मूर्खता का द्योतक माना है पर अभी अधिक पुष्ट प्रमाणों की आवश्यकता बनी हुई है।

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गुप्त शिल्प में रामायणी दृश्य

डॉ० मंजूश्री राव

सहायक प्रोफेसर प्राच्य निकेतन, बिड़ला म्यूजियम, भोपाल, (म० प्र०)

राम कथा संभवतः ६वीं शती ई० पू० से आरम्भ हुई और ३री शती ई० पू० से ३री शती ईसा के बीच रामायण की रचना की गयी। भारतीय शिल्प में रामचरित का अंकन पहले-पहल गुप्तकालीन स्मारकों में हुआ। झाँसी जिले (देवगढ़) के अंतर्गत बेतवा के किनारे खड़ा ६वीं शती ईसा का विष्णु मंदिर जो देवगढ़ में है, अपनी रामायणी दृश्यों के लिये अति प्रसिद्ध है।

औरंगाबाद से २५ कि० मी० उत्तर-पश्चिम में स्थित एलौरा का कैलास-मन्दिर अर्थात् रंगमहल अपने वास्तु-विन्यास और मूर्तिकला के लिये जग प्रसिद्ध है। इसके वृहद आँगन की दालानों में बयालीस पौराणिक दृश्यों का हृदयग्राही अंकन है। इनमें से कुछ रामायणी दृश्य भी हैं। कैलास की तिथि आठवीं शती मानी गई है।

नवादा जिले में नवादा से लगभग ३० कि० मी० लगभग उत्तर-पूर्व की ओर सकरी नदो के दायें किनारे पर अफसढ़ नाम का गाँव स्थित है। यहाँ पर अनेक खण्डहर हैं जिसमें विष्णु मन्दिर एवं मठों के अवशेष समाये हुए हैं। कुछ वर्ष पूर्व कुछ गाँव वालों ने यहाँ एक टीले का उत्खनन करवाया। यहाँ से आयताकार आठ ताखों में बने सुधामयी चित्रों (Stucco) में रामायणी कथा प्रदर्शित की गयी है। इस तरह का चित्रण देवगढ़ या सहेत महेत में नहीं है।

यहाँ पर अंकित दृश्यों में शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति को छोड़कर जो गौड़ीय रामायण पर आधारित है, शेष सभी बालमीकि रामायण से मेल खाते हैं।

गुप्त एवं प्रतीहारों के समय नचना कला एवं स्थापत्य का महत्वपूर्ण केन्द्र था। इस स्थान पर फुटकर स्थापत्य खण्डों के साथ-साथ रामायणी दृश्यों से सम्बन्धित पट्ट भी हैं जो भूरे बलुआ पाषाण से निर्मित हैं। नचना की मूर्ति कला में चुने हुये रामायणी कथा के प्रसंग दर्शाए गये हैं। इसका प्रारंभ शूर्पणखा की नाक काटने से लेकर लंका के राजा रावण के साथ हनुमान की प्रथम मुठभेड़ तक का चित्रण मिलता है।

श्रावस्ती के उत्खनन, बिहार के चौसा नामक स्थान, शृंगवेरपुर, बनारस आदि स्थानों से रामायणी दृश्यों से सम्बन्धित सामग्री प्राप्त हुई है।

इन सभी स्मारकों के दृश्यों का विस्तृत वर्णन निम्न प्रकार है :—

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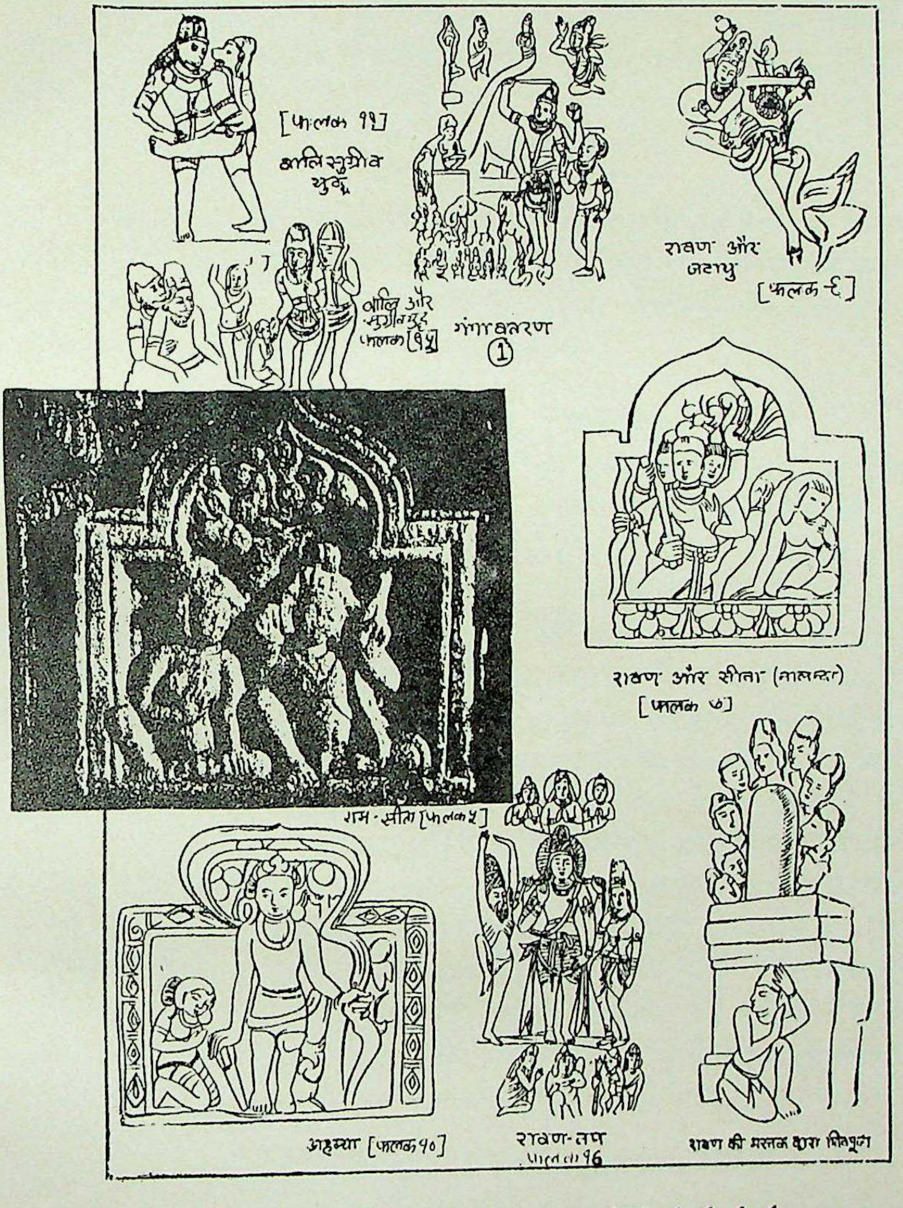

इस लेख के फलक २, ३ और ४ के लिये देखें—डा० चित्तरंजन प्रसाद सिन्हा का लेख 'रामायण सीन्स इन बिहार स्कल्पचर (Ramayan Scenes in Bihar Sculpture) के क्रमशः Fig. 1, 8 एवं 2

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वाल्मीकि आश्रम (देवगढ़)

यह दृश्य एक स्तम्भ पर अंकित है। अपने आश्रम में बैठे महर्षि वाल्मीकि शिष्य भारद्वाज को राम की गाथाएँ सुना रहे हैं। दोनों ऋषि मोढ़ों पर बैठे हैं। बीच में एक मूर्ति ब्रह्मा की जान पड़ती है।

वन गमन (देवगढ़)

इस दृश्य में राम, लक्ष्मण और सीता वन की ओर जा रहे हैं। राम के बाएँ लक्ष्मण और दायें सीता हैं। राम अपना धनुष बाँयें कंधे पर और लक्ष्मण अपना धनुष बाँयें हाथ में लिये हैं। सीता ने मेखला, कुण्डल, एकावली और वलय धारण किया है। ये आभूषण उन्हें सती अनसुईया ने दिये थे।

गंगावतरण (एलौरा) (फलक १)

कैलास-मंदिर के सामने उत्तर में एक ऐसा वास्तुपट्ट है, जिसमें उमा समेत चतुर्भुज शिव राक्षस की पीठ पर खड़े हुए हैं। दाहिने हाथ में वे अपने केशों की एक लट पकड़े हैं, जो उनके मुकुट के सिरे से निकलती है। स्त्री-मूर्ति रूपी गंगा की धारा लट से निकलकर जह्नु ऋषि तक पहुँचती है। वे उसे पी जाते हैं और तब गंगा उनके दाहिने कान के पास से निकलती हैं और पर्वत की चट्टानों में जा गिरती हैं। गंगा की मूर्ति के पास हाथ जोड़े तथा दाहिने पैर पर खड़े होकर तपस्या करते हुए राजा भगीरथ हैं। निचले भाग में संभवतः सप्तसिंधु की प्रतीक सात मूर्तियाँ हाथ जोड़े खड़ी हैं। ऐहोल की ब्राह्मण-गुफा में भी गंगावतरण का दृश्य अंकित है। किन्तु इसमें गंगा, यमुना तथा सरस्वती हाथ जोड़े हैं। शिव अपने पिछले हाथों में लटें पकड़े हैं। उनके दायें कृच्छतपस बायें पैर पर खड़े हुए और आकाश की ओर दोनों हाथ उठाए भगीरथ विद्यमान हैं। जयपुर ऐहोल की ब्राह्मण-गुफा में भी गंगावतरण का दृश्य अंकित है। किन्तु इसमें गंगा, यमुना तथा सरस्वती हाथ जोड़े हैं। शिव अपने पिछले हाथों में लटें पकड़े हैं। उनके दायें कृच्छतपस बायें पैर पर खड़े हुए और आकाश की ओर दोनों हाथ उठाये भगीरथ विद्यमान हैं। जयपुर राज्य के साँभर स्थान पर एक घड़े के ऊपर त्रिनेत्र शिव और नग्न स्त्री-मूर्ति रूपी गंगा के अंकन का आभास मिलता है।

गंगा पार करते हुए राम सीता एवं लक्ष्मण (अफसढ़) (फलक २)

इस दृश्य में आड़ी तिरछी रेखाओं द्वारा गंगा के जल प्रपात का प्रदर्शन किया गया है। जल में कच्छप, मत्स्य आदि जन्तु विद्यमान हैं। एक विशाल नौका जल पर आगे बढ़ रही है। पतवार लिये हुये निषद् नौका में सबसे आगे हैं। उसके पीछे अभय मुद्रा का प्रदर्शन करते हुये धनुर्धारी तपस्वी राम हैं। उनके शरीर पर छन्नवीर सुशोभित है। उनके पीछे तपस्विनी सीता हैं। सीता के पीछे धनुर्धारी छन्नवीर धारण किये तपस्वी लक्ष्मण हैं। चारों मूर्तियों के सिर टूट गये हैं।

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चित्रकूट में भरत मिलाप (अफसढ़) (फलक ३)

चित्रकूट में एक वृक्ष के नीचे राम लक्ष्मण और सीता बैठे हैं। अचानक दूर क्षितिज में धूल देख पड़ती है। लक्ष्मण को शंका होती है कि भरत ने राज्यमद में चूर होकर सैन्य सहित हम लोगों को विनष्ट करने हेतु बढ़े चले आ रहे हैं। वे शीघ्र पेड़ पर चढ़ जाते हैं और वहाँ से राम और सीता को चेतावनी भरे स्वर में कहते हैं कि अयोध्या के राजा भरत बड़े वेग से आक्रमण हेतु बढ़े चले आ रहे हैं। यह दृश्य उसी घटना का है। बाद में भरत जब सन्निकट पहुँचे और बड़े भाई से भक्तिपूर्वक मिले और राम को अयोध्या वापस चलने को कहा तो लक्ष्मण का क्रोध शान्त हुआ एवं आकांक्षाओं का समाधान भी।

राम सीता लक्ष्मण गुरू भारद्वाज के साथ (अफसढ़) (फलक ४)

प्रयाग के ऋषि भारद्वाज के समीप राम-सीता एवं लक्ष्मण घुटनों के बल एक वृक्ष के साये में बैठे हैं। राम की कहानी सुनने के पश्चात भारद्वाज ने उनकों एवं उनके साथियों को भोजन कराया। ऐसा कहा जाता है कि ऋषि ने उनको एक वृषभ भी प्रदान किया। पट्ट में ऋषि के पैर के बाँयें कोने में वृषभ (क्षतिग्रस्त) दर्शाया गया है। यह दृश्य ठीक वैसा ही चित्रित किया गया है जैसा कि रामायण (११, ५४, १२ १८) में वर्णित है।

राम-भरत मिलन से पूर्व का दृश्य (अफसढ़)

भरत अयोध्या से चित्रकूट में सेना सहित जिसमें झूल से अलंकृत हाथी एवं घोड़े सम्मिलित थे, राम से मिलने आये (११, ९६, १२-१३) ऐसा लक्ष्मण ने राम को बताया।

राम-भरत मिलन (अफसढ़)

इस दृश्य में भरत घुटने टेक कर राम के चरणों पर गिरते हैं। राम उन्हें आलिगन करते हैं। सीता एवं लक्ष्मण इस दृश्य को (खण्डित) देख रहे हैं। रामायण में दिये गये प्रसंग से यह दृश्य मेल खाता है।

अत्रि मुनि के आश्रम में राम (देवगढ़)

इस दृश्य में राम और अत्रि मुनि शिला पर बैठे हैं। लक्ष्मण पीछे खड़े हैं। आगे सीता भूमि पर दाहिना हाथ टेके बैठी हैं। उनके पीछे सती अनसुईया विराजमान हैं, इनका हाथ सीता जी के सिर पर रखा है और इनके दाहिने पैर के पास दो पक्षी विचर रहे हैं। वार्तालाप एक वृक्ष के नीचे हो रहा है। अत्रि मुनि बाएँ हाथ में ग्रंथ लिए दाहिना हाथ उठाकर राम को कुछ समझा रहे हैं। यहाँ सीता को जटाजूटधारिणी दिखाया गया है और वे संभवतः पुष्पाभरण पहने हुई हैं।

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दंडकवन में राम (देवगढ़)

दृश्य उस समय का है, जब शूर्पणखा के रोने-धोने पर खरदूषण ने दल-बल सहित राम पर चढ़ाई की थी। यहाँ राम और लक्ष्मण को राक्षसों का वध करते हुए दर्शाया गया है। राम धनुष पर बाण-संधान कर रहे हैं और लक्ष्मण अपने धनुष पर डोरी चढ़ा रहे हैं। राम के बाईं ओर स्थित अशोक-वृक्ष वन का द्योतक है।

राम-सीता (नालन्दा) (फलक ५)

नालन्दा में भी एक ऐसा दृश्य है जो पंचवटी अर्थात दण्डक–वन में वृक्ष के नीचे बैठे धनुर्धारी राम और सीता के वार्तालाप में संलग्न प्रदर्शित करता है।

शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति (देवगढ़)

राम एवं लक्ष्मण छन्नवीर धारण किये हुये हैं। राम के तरकश में बाण भरे हुये हैं। लक्ष्मण के हाथ में तलवार है।

पंचवटी के इस दृश्य में शिला पर बैठे हुए राम दाहिने हाथ से लक्ष्मण को कुछ संकेत कर रहे हैं। लक्ष्मण खड़े हैं और बाएँ हाथ से लौटती हुई शूर्पणखा का झोंटा पकड़े हुए हैं और अपने उठे हुए दाहिने हाथ में एक कटार थामे हुए हैं। शूर्पणखा की व्याकुलता और अपने कार्य में लक्ष्मण की तत्परता दर्शनीय है।

राम और सीता का पंचवटी–निवास नालन्दा के उक्त मन्दिर की चौपट्टी सं० १०३ में भी दिखाया गया है।

शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति (नचना कुठार) (फलक ६)

पंचवटी में जहाँ वृक्ष पुष्पों से आच्छादित है राम एवं सीता आनन्द के साथ बैठे वार्तालाप कर रहे हैं। शूर्पणखा सुन्दर युवती का रूप धारण कर लक्ष्मण के साथ प्रणय लीला करना चाहती है, जो उसके पास खड़े और कान बंद किये हैं। उनके हाथ प्रतिरोध प्रदर्शित करते हैं। शूर्पणखा को प्रणय लीला में अग्रसर होते देख लक्ष्मण घृणावश आगे बढ़ने लगते हैं।

इस पट्ट में अंकित मूर्तियाँ पुरुष एवं स्त्री की सौन्दर्यात्मकता के श्रेष्ठ आदर्श का प्रतिनिधित्व करती हैं। आकृतियाँ एकावली एवं अत्यल्प आभूषणों से युक्त प्रदर्शित हैं। अधो वस्त्र एवं दुपट्टा ऐसा प्रभाव दे रहा है मानो गीला हो, जिससे कि शरीर के घुमाव एवं आकार-प्रकार पूर्णतः लक्षित होते हैं।

सीता सौन्दर्य की मूर्तिमान आदर्श हैं। उनका मुख अण्डे के आकार का है। उनका शारीरिक गठन अतीव सुन्दर है। उनके अधरोष्ठ मोटे प्रदर्शित किये गये हैं। सीता को अत्याधिक मनोरम क्रम से घुंघराले जल प्रपात जैसे बालों से आच्छादित दर्शाया गया है। पीछे धम्मिल शैली में वेणी गुथी हुई प्रदर्शित की गई है।

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सीता की तुलना में शूर्पणखा को कोमल एवं सुकुमार शरीर वाली तरुणी के रूप में दर्शाया गया है। उसके बालों का जूड़ा अत्याधिक लम्बा है और वो सुस्पष्ट चंचल मुद्रा में प्रदर्शित की गई है। राम एवं लक्ष्मण जटा जूट धारण किये, चौड़े वक्ष-स्थल एवं अण्डाकार मुख-युक्त प्रदर्शित किये गये हैं। वे फुर्तीले, शक्ति तथा गरिमा युक्त प्रतीत होते हैं। यह दृश्य ५८ सें० मी० लम्बे एवं ३३ सें० मी० ऊँचे भूरे पाषाण पत्थर पर अंकित हैं।

वाल्मीकि रामायण के आलोचनात्मक संस्करण में शूर्पणखा अचानक तब प्रकट होती है, जबकि गोदावरी में स्नान करके राम एवं सीता आराम से चर्चा में लीन होते हैं। शूर्पणखा भयंकर राक्षसी थी जिसको अपने रूप का झूठा अभिमान था एवं जो राम के प्रथम दर्शन में ही मुग्ध हो गई थी। स्वयं को सुन्दर एवं सीता को कुरूप तथा राम के योग्य नहीं ऐसा राम को समझाकर वे उसे अपनी पत्नी के रूप में स्वीकार करलें, ऐसा प्रस्ताव उसने रखा। व्यंग से राम ने शूर्पणखा के रूप की प्रशंसा करते हुए उसको यह मंत्रणा दी कि वे अपनी पत्नी के साथ हैं स्वयं वह (शूर्पणखा) इतनी सुन्दर है कि वे उसे दूसरी स्वपत्नी बनाने में असमर्थ हैं। राम ने लक्ष्मण जिनकी पत्नी साथ में नहीं थी, के पास जाने को कहा जो उनसे आयु में भी अल्प एवं देखने में भी सुन्दर थे एवं हर दृष्टि से उसके उपयुक्त थे।

तत्पश्चात् वह लक्ष्मण के पास जाती है, लक्ष्मण भी उस अल्प बुद्धि राक्षसी का हास्य करते हैं और कहते हैं कि वे तो मात्र राम के सेवक हैं और स्वेच्छा से कुछ भी नहीं कर सकते और वे स्वयं इतनी अच्छी हैं एवं सुन्दर हैं कि दास के लायक नहीं हैं। अपनी राक्षसी प्रवृत्तियों के कारण शूर्पणखा ने सीता पर आक्रमण किया तब राम ने लक्ष्मण से उसको कुरूप करने को कहा।

वाल्मीकि रामायण में वर्णित शूर्पणखा के रूप से नचना की शूर्पणखा मेल नहीं खाती। नचना में इसे सुन्दर रूप वाली दर्शाया गया है। लक्ष्मण को यहाँ सुन्दर रूप वाला नवयुवक दर्शाया गया है जो उसकी लीलाओं से क्षुब्ध होकर आगे बढ़ जाते हैं। जबकि वाल्मीकि रामायण में उस मन्द बुद्धि शूर्पणखा के साथ लक्ष्मण हास्य करते हुये उसे मूर्ख बनाते हुये बताये गये हैं। परन्तु नचना में प्रदर्शित लक्ष्मण एक गम्भीर नवयुवक के रूप में हैं।

नचना के कलाकारों ने वाल्मीकि रामायण को नहीं बल्कि दूसरी पुस्तक एवं परम्परा को माना है। उत्तर-पूर्व की पाठ संशोधित या गौड़ीय रामायण में शूर्पणखा को अति चित्ताकर्षक वर्णित किया है। जबकि वह राम का हृदय जीतने हेतु उनके समक्ष उपस्थित होती है।

शूर्पणखा राम को देखकर प्रथम दृष्टि में ही कामातुर हो उठी और राम को अपने सौन्दर्य का प्रलोभन देकर सम्मोहित करने के लिये वह कृतसंकल्प हो गई। इस प्रकार का वर्णन गौणीय रामायण में मिलता है।

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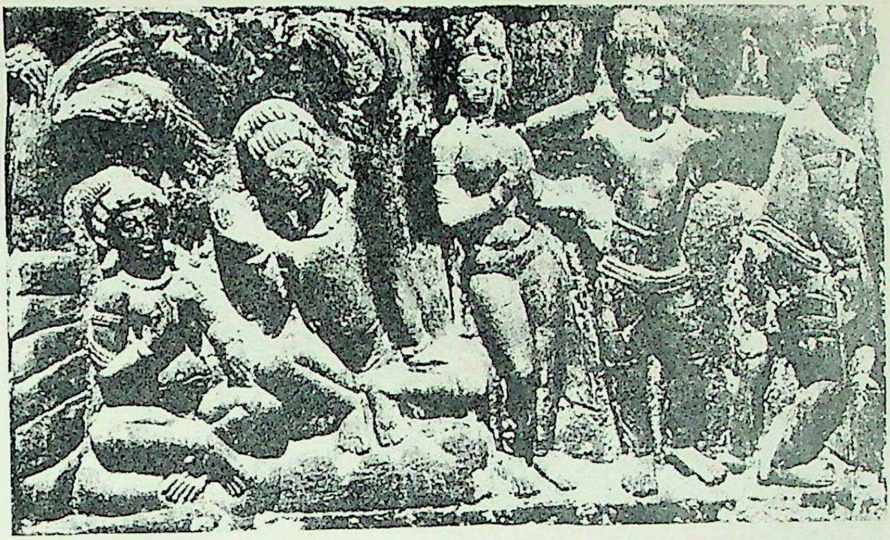
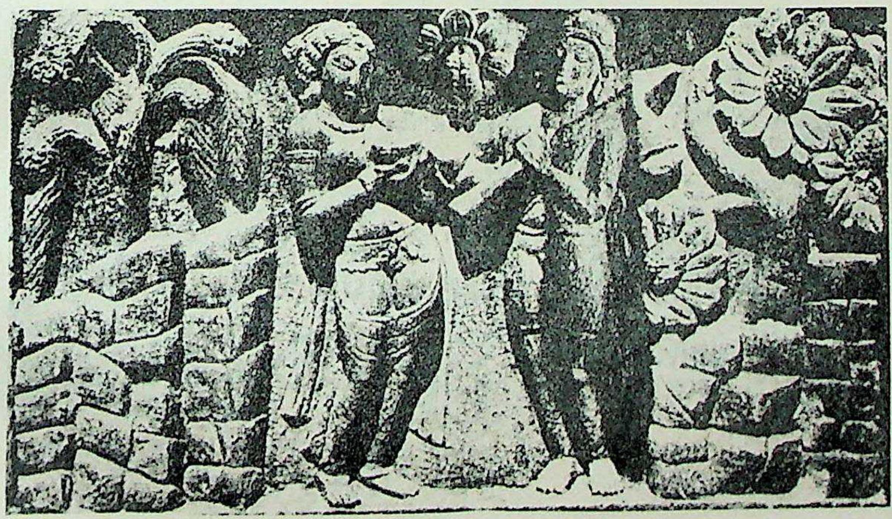


चित्र ६—शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति (नचना कुठार) ६वीं शती



चित्र ८—सीताहरण (एलोरा) ८वीं शती

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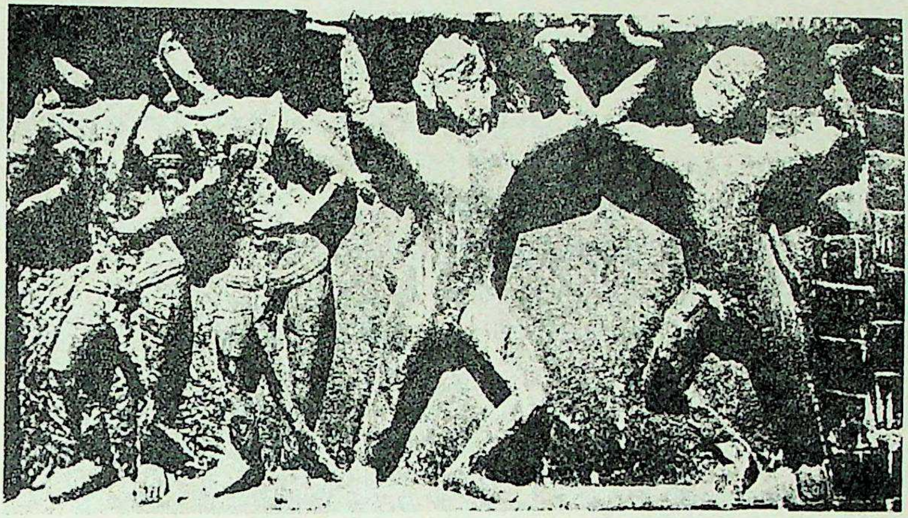
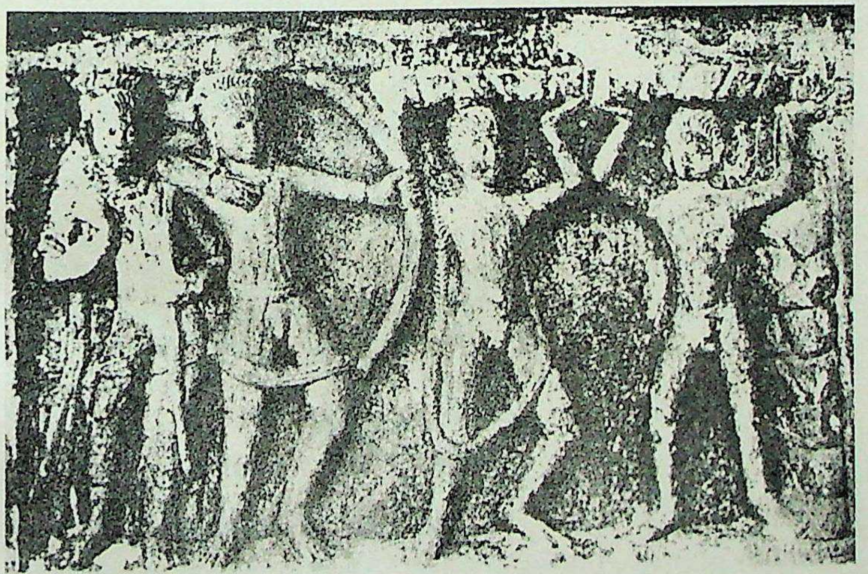


चित्र ११—बालि और सुग्रीव युद्ध (नचना कुठार) ६वीं शती



चित्र १२— बालि वध (नचना कुठार) ६वीं शती

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सीताहरण (देवगढ़ एवं नालन्दा) (फलक ७)

इस दृश्य में रावण सीता को डरा धमका कर उन्हें उठा ले जाने की फिराक में है। सीता धराशायी हो गई हैं। रावण झुक कर उन्हें उठा रहा है। नालंदा के उक्त मंदिर की चौपट्टी सं० १०२ में लंकाधिपति को तीन मुख और छः भुजाओं वाला दिखाया गया है। अपने तीन दाहिने हाथों में वह धनुष, खड्ग और कर्त्तरी लिए हुए है। उठे हुए बाँए हाथ में वह दोपट्टा तथा निचले बाएँ हाथ में बाण लिए हुए है। बिचले हाथ से वह तर्जनी मुद्रा का प्रदर्शन करते हुए सीता को त्रस्त कर रहा है। उसके गतिशील पैरों से ऐसा भासित हो रहा है कि वह आकाश में उड़ रहा है। सीता मुँह फेर कर बैठी हैं। स्पष्ट है कि वे रावण के कुकृत्य से पूर्णरूपेण संतप्त हैं।

सीताहरण (नचना कुठार) (फलक ८)

रावण जटा जूट युक्त भिक्षुक के रूप में, दायें हाथ में भिक्षा-पात्र एवं कंधे पर दण्ड-कमण्डल लिए सीता के समक्ष उपस्थित होता है। वह भिक्षा-याचना करता है। सीता खाद्यान्न का कटोरा लिए आगे बढ़ रही हैं। रावण उन्हें और अधिक समीप आने को कहता है। सीता को इस दृश्य में शान्त, अतीव मनोहारी एवं प्रभावशाली ढंग से चित्रित किया गया है। वे भिक्षा देने के लिए आगे बढ़ती हैं लेकिन उन्हें पीछे की ओर झुकना पड़ता है, क्योंकि निर्लज्ज भिक्षुक अपने भिक्षा पात्र को बढ़ाकर उसे अपनी ओर खींचना चाहता है। यह दृश्य दोनों ओर हरे-भरे वनों के बीच अति सुन्दर ढंग से प्रदर्शित किया गया है। बाँयीं ओर अशोक वृक्ष एवं दाँयीं ओर नागेश्वर का वृक्ष जिसके तने पुष्पों से आच्छादित हैं, राक्षस रावण एवं सीता इनके बीच प्रदर्शित हैं।

वाल्मीकि रामायण में यह वर्णित है कि किस प्रकार रावण सीता से छल करके राम-लक्ष्मण को दूर भेजकर, स्वयं भिक्षुक का वेश धारण कर छल पूर्वक उनको हर ले गया। इस वर्णन के अनुसार ही यह दृश्य अंकित है। इस तरह का चित्रण अन्यत्र नहीं देखने को मिलता।

सीताहरण (नालन्दा)

नालन्दा के एक दृश्य से ऐसा लगता है कि रावण ने सीता का चीर अपने बाँयें हाथ से हरण कर लिया है। चित्र में रावण को तीन मुख वाला दर्शाया गया है। ये तीन मुख उसके दशानन होने का संकेत देते हैं। सीता अपना बाँया हाथ ऊपर उठाये और दाहिना हाथ विमान की भूमि पर टिकाये हैं। उनके शरीर पर न कोई वस्त्र है, न आभूषण। वे मुँह फेरकर बैठी हैं और उग्र रूप रावण से अपने को बचाने के प्रयास में हैं। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है कि नालन्दा के ये रामायण सम्बन्धी दृश्य वहाँ पर प्राचीन हिन्दू मंदिर के चबूतरे पर अंकित हैं।

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सीताहरण (एलौरा) (फलक ९)

इस दृश्य में रथ पर एक मूर्ति बैठी है। एक पुरुष-मूर्ति ढाल-तलवार लिए हुए एक पक्षी की ओर झपट रही है। पक्षी भी अपनी चोंच से पुरुष-मूर्ति पर आक्रमण कर रहा है। पक्षी का बाँया पैर कट गया है। संम्भवतः दृश्य सीता-हरण का है, जबकि जटायु ने पंचवटी में सीता को हर ले जाने वाले रावण से युद्ध किया था।

अहल्योद्धार (देवगढ़)

यह दृश्य उस समय का है जब दाशरथि राम और लक्ष्मण मुनि विश्वामित्र के साथ धनुष-यज्ञ देखने मिथिला जा रहे हैं। रास्ते में उन्हें गौतम-आश्रम दीख पड़ा। वहाँ उन्हें एक शिला भी दीख पड़ी। पूछने पर विश्वामित्र ने बताया कि यह शिलारूप गौतम-नारी है, जिसकी यह दशा शापवश हुई है। दृश्य में धनुषधारी राम अपना दाहिना पैर और दाहिना हाथ अहल्या के सिर पर रक्खे हैं। अहल्या के हाथों में राम का दाहिना पैर है, जिस पर वह पुष्पांजलि चढ़ा रही हैं। पीछे खड़े धनुर्धर लक्ष्मण विस्मयपूर्वक प्रभु-लीला देख रहे हैं। विश्वामित्र जी एक दूसरी शिला पर बैठे प्रसन्नवदन राम से सारी घटना का विस्तार कह रहे हैं। पृष्ठभाग में सूर्यमुखी पुष्प और आम्रवल्लरियाँ झूम रही हैं।

राम और अहिल्या (नालन्दा) (फलक १०)

नालन्दा के मन्दिर सं० २ की चौकी के चारों ओर लगे हुए पत्थर के चौपटिए ७वीं शती के हैं। इनमें से एक में अहल्योद्धार का दृश्य दिखाया गया है। दृश्य में धनुर्धर राम खड़े हैं और दाहिने हाथ से शिला को छू रहे हैं। राम के सम्मुख शिला से सटी हुई, हाथ जोड़े, घुटने टेके अहिल्या बैठी हैं।

किष्किधा में राम (देवगढ़)

इस पट्ट पर राम, लक्ष्मण और सुग्रीव प्रदर्शित हैं। राम के कहने पर लक्ष्मण सुग्रीव को हार पहिना रहे हैं। सुग्रीव और वालि रंग रूप में इतने मिलते-जुलते थे कि मल्ल युद्ध के समय राम वालि को पहिचान न पाते थे, इसीलिए वे वालि पर बाण न चला पाते थे।

राम भक्त सुग्रीव (देवगढ़)

देवगढ़ के एक प्रदर्शन में पट्ट पर गदाधारी सुग्रीव अपनी ठोढ़ी पर अंगुली टिकाए राम के अलौकिक क्रिया-कलापों पर आश्चर्य व्यक्त कर रहे हैं। सम्भवतः सात साल वृक्षों को एक ही संधान में छेद डालने वाली घटना का सुग्रीव पर अत्यधिक प्रभाव पड़ा है और वे आश्वस्त से देख पड़ते हैं कि राम उनके प्रतिद्वंदी वालि को मार कर उनके संतापों का अन्त कर देंगे। यह दृश्य किष्किधा नगरी का है।

वालि और सुग्रीव युद्ध (देवगढ़)

किष्किधा में हुए वालि और सुग्रीव के मल्लयुद्ध का प्रदर्शन इस पट्ट पर किया

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गया है। सुग्रीव ने अपने शक्तिशाली प्रतिद्वंदी को भूमि पर पछाड़ दिया है। पास ही गदाधारी हनुमान भी खड़े हैं।

वाली सुग्रीव युद्ध (नचना-कुठार) [फलक १२-१३]

किष्किधा के वन में वालि एवं सुग्रीव को आपस में संघर्षरत अर्थात् एक-दूसरे पर पत्थर का प्रहार करते हुए दर्शाया गया है। आश्चर्यचकित राम एवं लक्ष्मण जिनकी वेषभूषा योद्धाओं की है एवं जो छन्नवीर एवं धनुष धारण किए हुए हैं एक किनारे खड़े हैं। दोनों बानर भ्राता इतने अधिक देखने में समान हैं कि राम एवं लक्ष्मण उन्हें पहिचानने में असमर्थ हैं। दोनों बानर प्रमुख अतीव शक्तिशाली प्रदर्शित किए गए हैं। राम एवं लक्ष्मण के व्यवहार में झिझक झलकती है। नचना कुठार से प्राप्त पाँचवे पट्ट में उपरोक्त आकृतियाँ कुछ परिवर्तन के साथ पुनः प्रदर्शित की गई हैं। बानर भ्राता आपस में एक दूसरे पर पत्थर प्रहार कर रहे हैं। सुग्रीव माला धारण करने के कारण दोनों में सुग्रीव कौन है, यह पहचाना जा सकता है। लक्ष्मण उसी तरह खड़े हैं जबकि राम निशाना लगाकर तीर से वालि को मारने हेतु उद्यत देख पड़ते हैं। आकृतियों में शौर्य का समावेश करने में कलाकार असफल रहा है।

वालि सुग्रीव युद्ध (एलोरा) [फलक १२]

कैलाश मन्दिर के आँगन के दक्षिण दालान में यह दृष्य अंकित है। इसमें वालि और सुग्रीव परस्पर गुथे हुए हैं और एक दूसरे पर प्राणान्तक प्रहार करने में लगे हैं।

शृगेंश्वर से प्राप्त एक वस्तु खंड में सुग्रीव अन्य बानर प्रमुख एक समूह में दर्शाये गये हैं। (हनुमान या अंगद) जो तीर एवं तरकश एवं छन्नवीर धारण किए राम एवं लक्ष्मण के पास मुकुट पहने खड़े हैं।

राम और हनुमान (देवगढ़)—श्रीराम एवं उनके अनन्य भक्त अंजनी पुत्र हनुमान की प्रथम भेंट इस चौपट्टी का विषय है। यह भेंट ऋश्यमूक पर्वत के आस-पास हुई थी। इस पर्वत पर रहने वाले बानर राज सुग्रीव ने जब राम और लक्ष्मण को अपनी ओर आते देखा तो संशकित होकर हनुमान को उनके पास यह जानने के लिए भेजा की कहीं यह लोग वालि के भेजे हुए तो नहीं है। यदि ऐसा हो तो वह अपने दल सहित ऋश्यमूक पर्वत छोड़कर अन्यत्र चला जाए।

राम और हनुमान (नचना कुठार) [फलक १४]—यह दृश्य पंपा वन का है। जटाजूटधारी छन्नवीर धारण किए पुष्पित अशोक वृक्ष के नीचे एक पत्थर पर राम एवं लक्ष्मण बैठे हुए हैं। राम का दाँया हाथ वितर्क मुद्रा में वृक्ष के समीप प्रदर्शित किया गया है। हनुमान नमस्कार मुद्रा में चौकी के नीचे भू पर घुटने के दल पथली मारे दोनों भाईयों के समक्ष बैठे हैं। बानरों का एक जोड़ा राम लक्ष्मण के पीछे है।

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वालि-वध (एलौरा) [फलक १५]—पट्ट संख्या (क) के निचले भाग में मरणोन्मुख वालि को एक अन्य बानर (सुग्रीव) थामे हुए है। बांई और सम्भवतः तारा खड़ी हैं और बालक अगंद राम के पैरों की वन्दना कर रहा है। राम अपने दाहिनें हाथ से उसे सांत्वना दे रहे हैं। रामानुगामी लक्ष्मण उनके पीछे खड़े हैं। सम्भवतः दृश्य वालि वध के समय का है, जबकि उसने अगंद और तारा की सुरक्षा का भार राम और सुग्रीव को सौंपा।

सुग्रीव अन्य समूह के साथ (शृंगवेरपुर)—शृंगवेरपुर से प्राप्त एक मूर्ति समूह में अन्य आकृतियों के साथ मुकुट धारण किये सुग्रीव तथा बानर प्रमुख (हनुमान या अंगद) दर्शाये गये हैं। राम एवं लक्ष्मण छन्नवीर धारण किए हुए हैं तथा तीर एवं तर्कश सहित प्रदर्शित किए गए हैं। जिनके समीप वे दोनों खड़े हैं। सुग्रीव एवं उसके साथी के साथ दो छोटे बानर नीचे प्रदर्शित किए गये हैं।

राम, लक्ष्मण, सुग्रीव, सीता की मुक्ति पर मंत्रणा करते हुए (बनारस)—भारत कला भवन वाराणसी में गुप्तकालीन अति सुस्पष्ट मूर्ति है जिसमें बानर सेना बैठी नीचे प्रदर्शित है। राम, लक्ष्मण, सुग्रीव एवं हनुमान के साथ सीता को छुड़ाने के लिये चर्चा कर रहे हैं। सुग्रीव के कन्धों को स्पर्श करके राम उनके अच्छे स्व सम्बन्ध व्यक्त कर रहे हैं। राम एवं लक्ष्मण छन्नवीर पहने हैं। धनुष एवं तरकश भी उनके पास हैं। सुग्रीव का प्रदर्शन देवगढ़ पट्ट जैसा प्रभावशाली है। यद्यपि हनुमान नग्न बानर के रूप में प्रदर्शित है।

राम, लक्ष्मण सुग्रीव विभीषण, अंगद (चौसा)—चौसा से प्राप्त गुप्त युगीन एक मृण्मय पट्ट में आकृतियों का समूह दर्शाया गया है। इस पट्ट में राम (खंडित सिर) छन्नवीर धारण किए हुए हैं, तीर एवं तरकश तथा जटाजूट युक्त लक्ष्मण, बानर प्रमुख सुग्रीव, विभीषण नग्न बानर के रूप में हनुमान, अंगद भी बानर के रूप में दर्शाया गया है, परन्तु वे पथली मारे एवं मुकुट पहने प्रदर्शित किए गये हैं। वास्तव में यह पट्ट भीतरगाँव जैसी उच्च कला के तुल्य है।

सेतुवन्ध (देवगढ़) :—बड़े-बड़े शिला खंड लेकर कतार बांधकर जाते हुए बानर इस पट्ट पर दिखाए गए हैं। सम्भवतः भारत और लंका के बीच पुल बाँधने का यह सामूहिक प्रयास जान पड़ता है। सारनाथ के एक शिला खंड (जी-३७) पर यह दृष्य बड़ा भला बन पड़ा है।

अशोकवाटिका में सीता (देवगढ़) :—यह पट्ट बहुत नष्ट हो चुका है, किन्तु इतना स्पष्ट है कि रावण यहाँ सीता को अनेक प्रलोभन देने के बाद भी असफल होता हुआ दिखाया गया है और अब धमकियों का प्रयोग कर रहा है। सीता की कठोर मुद्रा और शारीरिक सन्तुलन उनके अप्रतिम पतिपरायणा होने के प्रत्यक्ष प्रमाण हैं।

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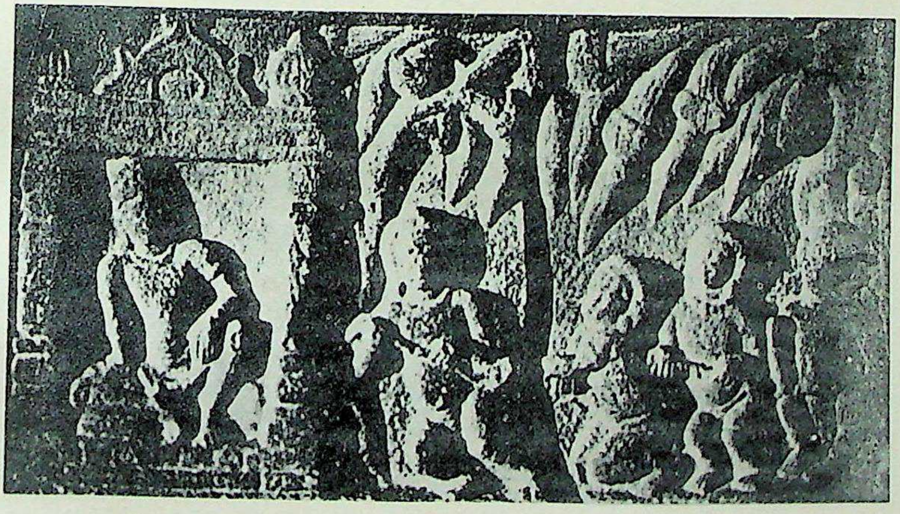
चित्र १४—राम और हनुमान (नचना कुठार) ६वीं शती



चित्र १६—रावण के सभागृह में हनुमान (नचना कुठार) ६वीं शती

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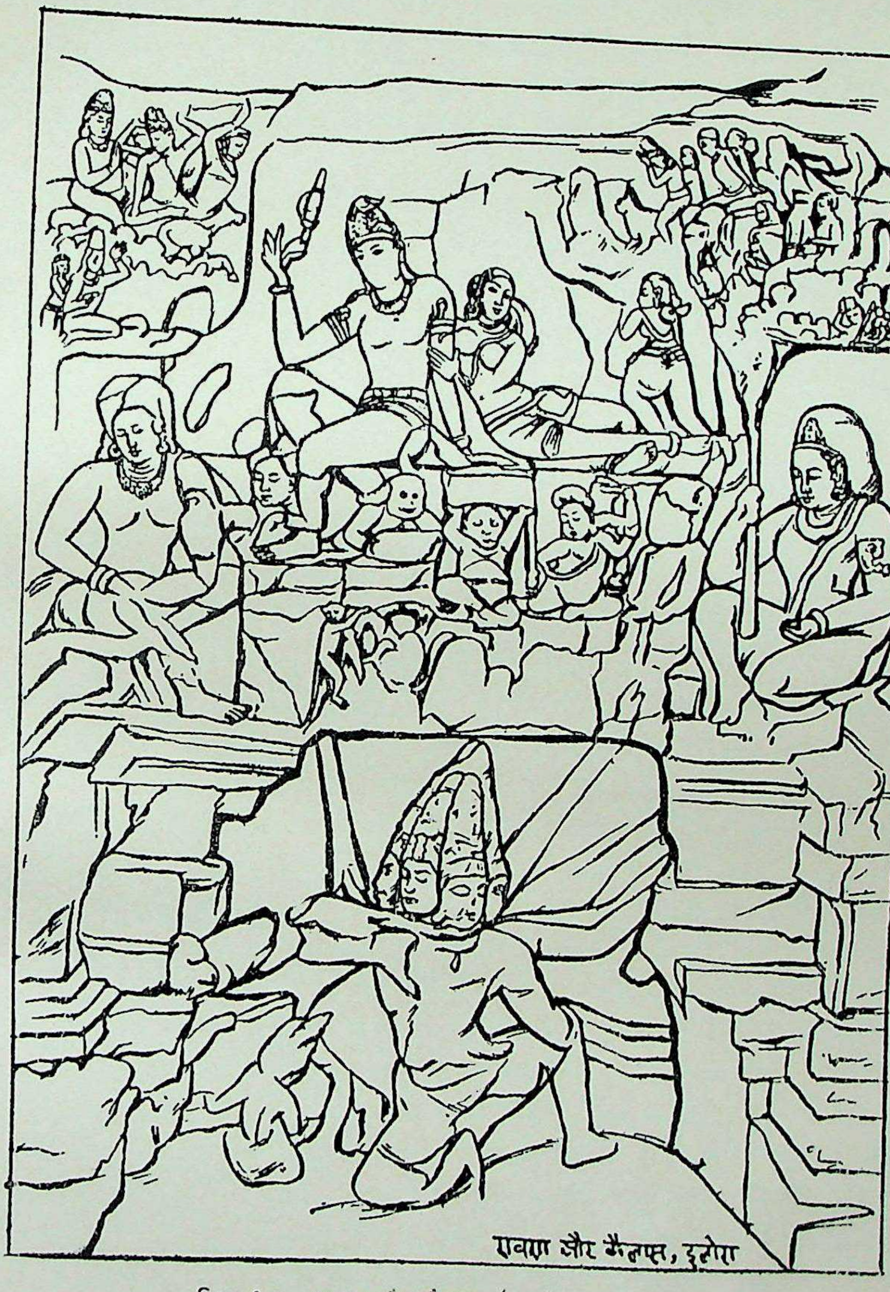

चित्र १८—रावण और कैलाश (एलौरा) ८वीं शती

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रावण के सभागृह में हनुमान :— (नचना कुठार) [फलक १६] :—वास्तव में आकर्षक व्यक्तित्व वाला अभिमानी रावण किरीट मुकुट धारण किए महाराज-लीलासन मुद्रा में अपने प्रासाद में बैठा है। इन्द्रजीत की अध्यक्षता में बौने राक्षस हनुमान को जो प्रासाद के बाहर अशोकवाटिका में बंधे हैं, खींचकर रावण के सन्मुख ला रहे हैं। यह दृश्य वास्तु कला, दृष्यावली तथा आकृतियों की मनोरम झांकी है और कलाकार की उच्च कल्पना दर्शाती है।

जिस स्थान में सिंहासन पर रावण बैठा है वह साधारण प्रासाद है। सामने से देखने पर ऐसा प्रतीत होता है मानों एक ताखे को कपोत पालिका एवं पट्टिका को दो स्तम्भ थामे हैं, इसके ऊपर चन्द्रशाला है जो आमलक से आवेष्ठित देवगढ़ मन्दिर के प्रवेश द्वार पर मडंप बनाये गये हैं ठीक उसी प्रकार यहाँ भी दृष्य उपस्थित किया गया है। आकृतियों में रावण किरीट मुकुट धारण किए भूमरा के यम के सदृश प्रतीत होता है। राक्षस भी भूमरा के बौने शिवगणों के समान अंकित किए गए हैं। उनके अग्रणी इन्द्रजीत हैं।

वाल्मीकि रामायण के अनुसार हनूमान ने रावण के प्रासाद की सुन्दर अशोकवाटिका को नष्ट भ्रष्ट कर डाला केवल वही स्थान शेष रहा जहाँ सीता रहती थीं। जब यह सूचना रावण को दी गई तब वह अत्यधिक क्रोधित हुआ और हनुमान को पकड़ कर लाने के लिये कहा। उसने सर्वप्रथम किन्नरों को जम्बुमाली के साथ, मन्त्रियों के सात वीर पुत्रों को तथा राक्षसों के ५ अग्रणी योद्धाओं को क्रम से भेजा। अन्त में उसने अपने पुत्र अक्ष को सेना सहित भेजा। जब रावण को यह सूचना मिली कि हनुमान ने सबको ध्वंस कर दिया है तब उसने अपने पुत्र अजेय इन्द्रजीत को हनुमान को पकड़ लाने के लिए कहा। इन्द्रजीत ने हनुमान पर परम्परागत अस्त्र-शस्त्रों से वार करना प्रारम्भ किया परन्तु जब ये सब निष्क्रय सिद्ध हुए तब उसने ब्रह्मा द्वारा प्रदत्त प्रक्षेपास्त्र का प्रयोग किया। हनुमान ब्रह्मास्त्रके प्रहार से अपने को बचा न सके एवं अपंग हो गये। ब्रह्मास्त्र से बंधे हुये हनुमान को देखकर राक्षसों को सन्तोष नहीं हुआ और उन्होंने उनको साधारण रस्सी से बाँध दिया इस रस्सी से बाँधे जाने के कारण उन पर ब्रह्मास्त्र का प्रभाव समाप्त हो गया और वे मंत्रानुवेष्टिव अस्त्र से मुक्त हो गये। यद्यपि वे ब्रह्मास्त्र के प्रभाव से मुक्त हो गये फिर भी उन्होंने ऐसा प्रदर्शित नहीं किया और राक्षसों द्वारा खींचे जाने पर स्वेच्छा से खिचते खिचते रावण के सभागृह में उनके समक्ष उपस्थित किये गये। वास्तव में हनुमान भी यही चाहते थे कि रावण के समक्ष उन्हे ले जाया जाए क्योंकि वे उससे मिलने हेतु आतुर थे। रावण के वैभव-शाली सुन्दर प्रासाद का अवलोकन कर हनुमान आश्चर्य चकित रह गये।

प्रदर्शित प्रतिमा जैसा रामायण में वर्णित है, सत्यतः उसी का वस्तुतः प्रतिनिधित्व प्रतिमाओं में हुआ है।

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हनुमान एवं राक्षस युद्ध (श्रावस्ती)

सहेत-महेत से प्राप्त तीन मृण्मय मूर्तियों मे से एक पर हनुमान तथा राक्षसों का युद्ध का चित्रण मिलता है।

हनुमान एवं राक्षस युद्ध (अफसढ) में भी ऐसा ही एक दृश्य चित्रित है।

लक्ष्मण और सुग्रीव-देवगढ़

यह दृश्य उस समय का है जब वालि-वध के बाद राम ने सुग्रीव को किष्किंधा का राजा घोषित कर दिया था और सुग्रीव ने सीता की खोज करने का वचन दिया था किन्तु राजमद में आकर वे कर्तव्य विमुख हो गए थे। यहाँ उन्हें सुरापान करते हुए दिखाया गया है। उनके पीछे उनको स्त्री रूमा और दाहिने भतीजा अंगद तथा बाएँ हनुमान उपस्थित हैं। क्रुद्ध लक्ष्मण को आया देख ये दोनों सुग्रीव से उनका स्वागत करने का आग्रह कर रहे हैं लक्ष्मण की मूर्ति खंडित होने से स्पष्ट नहीं है।

मृत-संजीवनी

इस पट्ट पर हनुमान हिम प्रदेश का एक खंड लेकर लंका की ओर उड़े जाते हुए दिखाए गए हैं। दृश्य उस समय का है जब शक्ति के प्रहार से लक्ष्मण मरणप्राय हो गए थे और स्वयं राम को उनके जीवन के लिए बिलखना पड़ा था। यह हनुमान का ही कार्य था कि लंका के ख्यातिनामा वैद्य वुषंण को वे रातोंरात उठा लाए थे और उनकी सलाह से मृतसंजीवनी लाने हिमालय गए थे। औषधि की पहिचान न कर पाने के कारण वे पर्वत ही उखाड़ कर ले आए।

रावण का तप (एलौरा) [फलक १७, १७अ]

इस दृश्य में दशानन रावण शिवलिंग की वेदी पर अपने सिरों की आहुति दे रहा है। लिंग के चारों ओर नौ मुंड हैं, जिनका आकार मुंडमाल की भाँति है। शिव-भक्त रावण के दुष्कर तप का यह अंकन संभवतः भारत में अन्यत्र नहीं हुआ।

रावण और कैलास (एलौरा) [फलक १८]

कैलास के मंडप के दक्षिण पश्चिम सिरे पर यह दृश्य अंकित है। लंकेश रावण कैलासपति शिव को प्रसन्न करने के हेतु कैलास पर्वत उठा रहा है। पर्वत पर शिव अपने गणों के साथ और उमा अपनी सखियों के साथ विराजमान हैं। पर्वत के हिलने के कारण भयत्रस्त उमा शिव के शरीर से सटी जा रही हैं शिव के गण रावण पर शिलापात कर रहे हैं। किन्तु शिव अडिग हैं। उन्हें यह सब बाल कौतुक लग रहा है। वे अपने चरण से कैलास को दबाकर दशानन के श्रम को निरर्थक किए दे रहे हैं।

सारांश में यह कह सकते हैं कि रामायण की अधिकांश घटनाओं का दिग्दर्शन गुप्तकालीन स्मारकों में हुआ है। एलोरा में-रावण द्वारा कैलास-पर्वत उठाना और अपने सिरों की आहुति, गंगावतरण, सीताहरण, वालि-सुग्रीव युद्ध, वालिवध; अफसढ़

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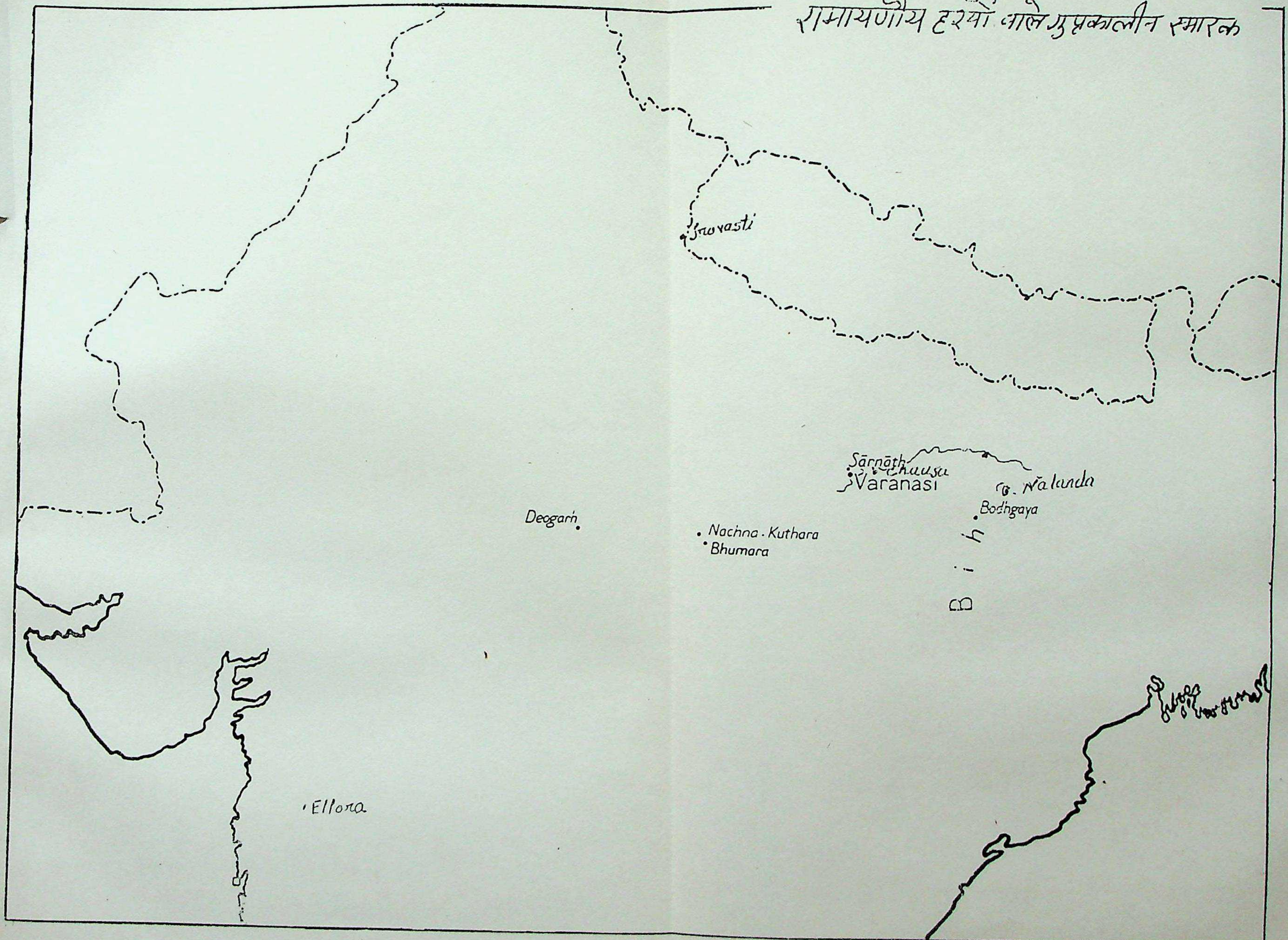
रामायणीय दृश्यों वाले गुप्तकालीन स्मारक



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में–राम-सीता-लक्ष्मण गंगा पार करते हुए; श्रृंगवेरपुर में गंगा पार करते हुए राम-सीता-लक्ष्मण, चित्रकूट में भरत-मिलाप, राम-सीता-लक्ष्मण गुरु भारद्वाज के साथ, हनुमान-रावण युद्ध; नचनाकुठार में-शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति, सीताहरण, वालि-सुग्रीव-युद्ध, राम और हनुमान, वालिवध, भारतद्वाज ऋषि को रामगाथा सुनाते हुए, वनगमन, अत्रिमुनि के आश्रम में राम, दंडकवन में राम, शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति, सीताहरण, अहिल्योद्धार, किष्किंधा में राम, राम भक्त सुग्रीव, वालि-सुग्रीव युद्ध, राम और हनुमान, सेतुबंध, अशोकवाटिका में सीता, लक्ष्मण और सुग्रीव, मृतसंजीवनी द्वारा लक्ष्मण की प्राण रक्षा; नालन्दा में राम-सीता दंडकवन में, सीताहरण, अहिल्योद्धार; वाराणसी में राम-लक्ष्मण-सुग्रीव हनुमान के साथ सीता की मुक्ति के उपाय खोजते हुए बानर सेना के साथ; चौसा में- राम-लक्ष्मण-सुग्रीव-विभीषण तथा अंगद का दृश्य भीतरगाँव के दृश्य के सदृश हैं। श्रावस्ती में–हनुमान और राक्षसों का युद्ध चित्रित है। इस लेख में उपर्युक्त आठ प्राचीन स्मारकों के रामायणी दृश्यों का वर्णन किया गया है। सेतुबंध का दृश्य केवल देवगढ़ और सारनाथ में है। कैलास-पर्वत को उठाता हुआ रावण अपने सिरों की आहुति एलोरा में देता है। वहीं पर रावण और जटायु के युद्ध का अंकन भी है जो अन्यत्र उपलब्ध नहीं है। नचना कुठार के सीताहरण जैसा दृश्य अन्यत्र अप्राप्य है। अधिक प्रचार-प्रसार की शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति, सीता हरण और बालि-बध का हुआ है।

फलक चित्रों का परिचय

१. गंगावतरण (एलौरा), ८वीं शती।
२. गंगा पार करते हुये राम, सीता एवं लक्ष्मण (अफसढ़), ७वीं शती।
३. चित्रकूट में भरत मिलाप (अफसढ़), ७वीं शती।
४. राम सीता गुरू भारद्वाज के साथ (अफसढ़), ७वीं शती।
५. राम सीता (नालन्दा), ८वीं शती।
६. शूर्पणखा की दुर्गति (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
७. सीताहरण (देवगढ़), ६वीं शती।
८. सीताहरण (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
९. सीताहरण (एलौरा), ८वीं शती।
१०. राम और अहिल्या (नालन्दा), ८वीं शती।
११. वालि और सुग्रीव युद्ध (देवगढ़) ६वीं शती।
१२. वालि और सुग्रीव युद्ध (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
१३. राम द्वारा वालि वध (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
१४. राम और हनुमान (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
१५. वालि वध (एलौरा), ८वीं शती।
१६. रावण के सभा-गृह में हनुमान (नचना कुठार), ६वीं शती।
१७. रावण का तप (एलौरा), ८वीं शती।

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१८. रावण और कैलास (एलौरा), ८वीं शती ।
१९. रामायणी दृश्यों वाले गुप्तकालीन स्मारक का मानचित्र ।

सन्दर्भ ग्रन्थों की सूची

१. राष्ट्रकवि मैथिलीशरण गुप्त अभिनन्दन ग्रंथ, देवगढ़ और इलोरा के रामायण-सम्बन्धी दृश्य : डॉ० भास्करनाथ मिश्र, प्रधान सम्पादक-डॉ० बासुदेव अग्रवाल, राष्ट्रकवि मैथिलीशरण गुप्त अभिनन्दन समीति, कलकत्ता-१९५९ ।
२. कामिल बुल्के कृत "रामकथा" १९५० ।
३. माधोस्वरूप वत्स, देवगढ़ का गुप्तकालीन मंदिर, मेमाअर आफ दि आर्कियोलोजिकल सर्वे आफ इण्डिया, नं०-७० ।
४. रघुवंश सर्ग ११, ३४ ।
५. उत्तर प्रदेश इतिहास परिषद् पत्रिका, २३ ।
६. पश्चिमी भारतीय पुरातत्वीय सर्वेक्षण, ग्रन्थ सं०-५, एलौरा केव्स ।
७. इण्डियन हिस्टारिकल क्वार्टर्ली, ३० (१९५४) ।
८. कृष्ण देव, गुप्त रामायण पैनल फ्राम नचना, छवि २ फेलिसीटेशन वाल्यूम ।
९. वी० एस० अग्रवाल, ए सर्वे आफ गुप्त आर्ट एण्ड सम स्कल्प्चर्स फ्राम नचना-कुठार एण्ड खोह, ललित कला, नं०-९ ।
१०. बी० के० सिन्हा, रीप्रेजन्टेशन आफ रामायणिक सीन्स इन एन ओल्ड टेम्पल ऐट अफसढ़, जर्नल आफ बिहार रिसर्च सोसाइटी-वाल्यूम-५४, १९६८ ।
११. जे० सी० हार्ले, गुप्त स्कल्प्चर्स, ऑक्सफोर्ड १९७४ ।
१२. फ्रेडरिक एम० एशर, दि आर्ट आफ ईस्टर्न इण्डिया, १९८० ।
१३. एस० सी० डे, हिस्टॉरिसिटी आफ रामायण एण्ड दी इन्डोआर्यन सोसाइट इन इण्डिया एण्ड सीलोन, दिल्ली-१९७६ ।

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SOME IMPORTANT GUPTA TERRACOTTA PLAQUE DEPICTING RĀM-KATHĀ

Umesh Chandra Dwivedi

The terracotta figurines of India occupy a respectable place in the domain of her artistic activity. It remained the most popular material in which common people tried to show their artistic capability. In the Gupta period, specially during late phase, plaque of large size with figures in high relief were prepared. These moulded bricks or panels were very helpful in depicting so many person at one place and, therefore, depiction of some story or scene was possible.

The story of Rāma or Rāmāyaṇa was one of the important themes which the Gupta artist wanted to depict in their artistic creation. We have few very beautiful piece of this period depicting Rāmāyaṇa scenes.

One of the most beautiful piece of this period is presently preserved in the Asia Society, New York.[1] Here two figures, identified as Rāma and his brother Lakshmana, sit together in a plain arched niche. Their isolation against the background allows one to focus on their interaction, with their bodies turned slightly towards each other. Rāma, the somewhat larger figure at the left, holds a bow in his left hand, and each figure carried quiver or arrows attached by straps across the chest. The naturalness of the scene is further emphasized by the way in which the heads emerge from the border of this arched terracotta panel, enhancing a sense of three-dimensionality.

This tile conforms to the general style of Gupta period modeling found throughout Uttar Pradesh. This piece can be attributed to Bhitargaon, where stands one of the finest brick temples of the Gupta period, as it shares many stylistic affini-

1. Amy G. Poster, From Indian Earth, 400 years of Terracotta Art, p. 156, fig. 94

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ties with the terracotta plaques from that site.[1] Bhitargaon figures are characteristically seen in either frontal or three quarter views, as here, and when seated they rest on the base of the panel, generally forming long, sweeping curvilinear compositions. The characteristic physical features of Bhitargaon figures also appear in the Asia Society terracotta. These include cascading looped curls, full lips, slightly building and elongated eyes, long flat earlobes and long and slightly flattened fingers and toes. The torses and limbs are also elongated and are modeled in high relief with help of incised lines that detail costume and ornaments. The surface finish of Bhitargaon plaques is usually refined, although many remains are damaged, and the figures have a stature and look that match the best of Gupta stone sculptures. This plaque can be easily placed in the 5th century A.D.

We have few beautiful terracotta plaques from the excavation of Sahet-Maheth. These terracottas were discovered at Kachchi Kuti in Maheth by Dr. Hoey. The most interesting of the Maheth terracottas was the terracotta plaque which shows a monkey fighting with a warrior,[2] who looks like a Rākshasa. The monkey faced figure is carrying a trunk of a big tree[3] with both his upraised hands, the Rākshasa is carrying a sword, in his right hand. This monkey is identified with Hanuman, who is attacking the Rākshasa with a trunk of big tree being carried in his both hands. He is attacking the Rākshas with his right leg also which is shown placed on the knee of Rākshasa's left leg. The Rākshasa is shown well ornamented. The border

1. Pratapāditya Pal, The Ideal Image–The Gupta Sculptural Tradition and Its Influence, Exhibition Catalogue (The Asia Society, New York), 1978, pp. 75,79.

2. Archaeological Survey of India, Annual Report, 1907–08, p. 96, pl. XX.

3. *Ibid.*, p. 104. P. XXVIII. Unfortunately the author of this report has identified it with two axes being carried by Hanuman in both his hands. In page 96, this object has been identified as a long mace.

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of this almost complete rectangular panel is carved with a lotus design. However, there is no border on the proper right side. This plaque can be placed in the 5th-6th century A.D.

Another plaque depicting a very similar scene was also discovered from this site. However, there the heads of the two figures were found detached from the panel and had to be refixed. There can be little doubt that these two scenes refer to the exploits of the monkey hero Hanuman described in the 5th-6th cantos of the Rāmāyaṇa [1]

We have another terracotta plaque from this place, the proper left end of which is missing and the preserved portion is broken but joined.[2] The panel depicts a male figure standing to right raising his right hand in front of his chest and holding an indistinct object in the left hand. A female figure is shown kneeling before him with folded hands. This scene has been recognised as the meeting between Lakshmana and the Rākshasi Śūrpanakhā, who with bent knees and folded hands, implores him to grant her his love.[3] This work is also of the same period.

We have another terracotta plaque in the collection of Mrs. James W. Alsdorf of United States of America, which depict a hunter accompanied by a monkey.[4] The figures, most likely, are that of Lakshmana and Hanuman. The movement of the figures, slightly flex bodies to the right and the projection of their heads out of the border of the plaque, evoke a rythmic sense of movement. The front portion of this plaque is broken and some other figure may have been depicted there. The jatā-mukuta, generally noticed on the head of Lakshmana is, however, missing here. But presence of monkey headed male figure, who wears a crown, with Hanuman helps us in identi-

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1. *Ibid.*, p. 96, No. 335
2. *Ibid.*, p. 105, pl. XXVIII
3. *Ibid.*, p. 96, No. 288
4. Amy G. Poster, *op. cit.*, p. 157, fig. 95

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fying this figure also. The straps across the chest supporting a quiver of arrows also indicate that he is either Rāma or Lakshmana, the later one most probably. This panel is datable in 5th-6th century A.D.

Another notable terracotta specimen, a panel from Bhind near Gwalior is presently housed in the National Museum, New Delhi.[1] It contains a dejected female seated by the side of a tree. Her bent head rests on the palm of her lifted right hand. She wears a sāri, a plain torque, round ear-rings, bracelets and anklets. A zigzag line on the forehead, represents her curly hair. The panel is assignable to late 5th century A.D. Some scholars are of the view that the subject relates to the captivity of Sitā in Aśoka-grove of Laṅka by Rāvaṇa.[2] The sorrow and sadness on the face of Sitā is clearly visible.

We have another very beautiful terracotta plaque from Chausa, district Bhojpur in Bihar, presently preserved in Patna Museum, Patna.[3] The front portion of this plaque is, however, broken. The figure in the front portion is headless. Behind him is youthful human figure in jaṭā-mukuṭa carrying a bow in his left hand. Behind him are four monkey figures, two of which are wearing crown. Out of these two crowned figures, one looks like a child. The other crowned mokey's head is only visible. The crown of this monkey is broken and damaged. Behind him is another human figure wearing crown. There is sorrow and sadness on the face of every figure except the elder crowned monkey-faced figure who looks angry.

The first human figure is generally identified as Lakshmana and this identification looks correct. The elderly crowned headed monkey figure can be identified with Hanuman and the child like crowned monkey figure can be identified with Aṅgad, son of Bāli, who was crowned prince of Sugrva, the monkey

1. Sri Bhagwan Singh, Guptakalin Hindu Deva-Pratimayen, p. 77, pl. 61
2. *Ibid.*, p. 77
3. Patna Museum, Patna, Arch. No. 6528

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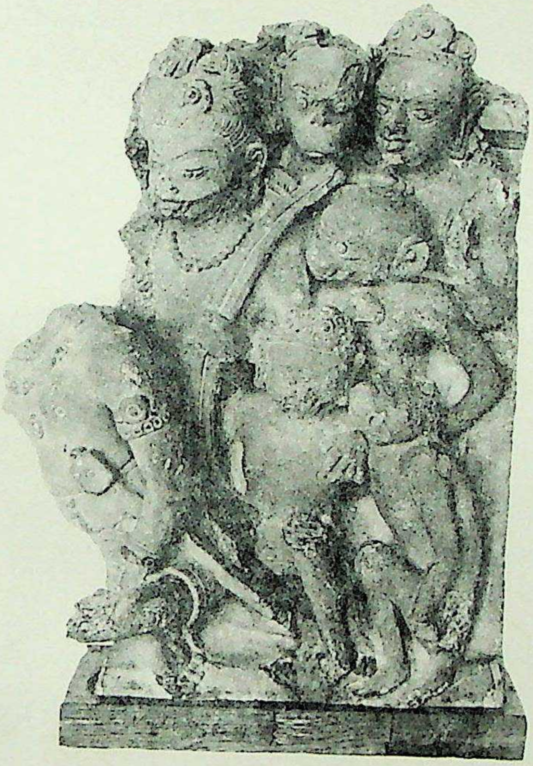

Terracotta Ramayana Scene Chausa, Bhojpur Gupta Period.

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chief. The last crowned human figure may be a minister of Bibhishaṇa. There is a general tendency to identify the first figure with Rāma, who is shown seated with his legs crossed and a long sword fixed at his side. However, this identification looks incorrect. As we know Rāma is always shown with a bow which is not shown with this figure. Again Rāma is always shown youthful like Lakshamana, which is not here. Here the physic of the figure is more stout and elderly. Again, we can see an ornamented neckless and arm-let worn by this figure which is always missing in the representations of Rāma during his Vanavāsa. He must has been wearing an ekavali like Lakshmana, had he been Rāma. Therefore, it will be wrong to identify this figure with Rāma. Most probably this figure is that of Bibhīshaṇa who is generally shown with a śword and well ornamented. Rāma may have been shown lying before him in the intact plaque. As we know, Rāvaṇa has thrown Śaktī to kill Bibhīshaṇa during the Laṅka-war but Rāma came before Bibhīshaṇa to save him. Though Rāma was not killed with this Śaktī, he became unconcious for a few moment and that very scene may have been depicted by the artist here. Therefore, every one in this plaque look sad and Hanumana looks angry.

Thus we see that Rāma-Kathā was a popular theme among the clay-modellars of the Gupta period.

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1. Amy G. Poster, *op. cit.*, p. 155, fig. 93; Shri Bhagwan Singh op. cit., p. 77 etc.

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सारनाथ की कला में राम-आख्यान

डॉ० ओमप्रकाश पाण्डेय

ऐतिहासिक सांस्कृतिक एवं धार्मिक दृष्टि से उत्तर प्रदेश प्राचीन काल से महत्वपूर्ण तीर्थों का केन्द्र रहा है। गंगा एवं सरयू (घाघरा) नदी के तट पर स्थित अयोध्या, प्रयाग, काशी पूर्व से ही हिन्दू परम्परा के अस्तित्व को संजोये हुए था, यह सनातन धर्म की नगरी काशी जिसकी राजधानी वाराणसी थी, उससे ६ कि० मी० उत्तर पूर्व दिशा में स्थित सारनाथ जहां पर गौतम बुद्ध ने अपने धर्म (धर्मचक्र प्रवर्तन) का उपदेश दिया था। सारनाथ बौद्ध कला का केन्द्र होते हुए भी यहां पर अन्य धर्मों का भी विकास हुआ। उत्खनन से प्राप्त मूर्तियां जिसमें बौद्ध, जैन एवं हिन्दू की हैं। हिन्दुओं में वैष्णव एवं शैव धर्म की मूर्तियाँ जिसे स्थानीय संग्रहालय में सुरक्षित रखा गया है। सारनाथ कला की रामायण कालीन शिल्प कला का अंकन जिसे गुप्त काल के कलाकारों ने प्रदर्शित किया प्राप्त की गई है।

सारनाथ के उत्खनन से प्राप्त कला-कृतियों से यहाँ की धार्मिक स्थिति का परिचय मिलने लगता है। अभिलेखों[1] में गुप्त सम्राटों के धर्म तथा उनके आदर्श की बात अंकित है, उससे स्पष्ट हो जाता है कि गुप्तयुग में हिन्दू धर्म का व्यापक प्रचलन के साथ-साथ अन्य धर्म की भी मान्यता रही, देवी-देवताओं की कल्पना को कला में प्रदर्शित किया गया, इसमें दशावतार में वाराह, रामावतार, नरसिंह, वामनराम, बलराम आदि विशेष उल्लेखनीय हैं[2]। साहित्य में अयोध्या के राजा राम, अवतार मालिका में राम या दाशरथि राम के नाम से प्रसिद्ध हैं। आदि काव्य रामायण में रामकथा की झांकी में कोई सन्देह नहीं। गुप्तकाल के पहले की राम की प्रतिमा या रामकथा अंकन का दृश्य फलक अभी तक प्रकाश में नहीं आया।[3] उत्तर भारत के अनेक स्थलों से रामायण कथा का चित्रण मिलता है। जिसमें देवगढ़, नचना साहेट-माहेट, श्रृंग्वेरपुर (प्रयाग) वाराणसी आदि से कलाएं प्राप्त की गयी हैं। सर्वप्रथम रामायण का दृश्य गुप्तकाल में कला के रूप में अंकित किया गया। इस कला में लंका काण्ड को विशेष रूप से प्रदर्शित कलाएँ देखने को मिलती हैं। इनके पात्र में राम, लक्ष्मण, हनुमान, वालि, सुग्रीव को प्रकाश में लाया गया है। कलात्मक सौन्दर्य में राम की अनेक लीलाओं का दृश्य जिसमें राम वनगमन, सीताहरण, अहिल्या उद्धार, राम द्वारा धनुष से राक्षस बध का दृश्य, सीता का अशोक वाटिका में रहना, यह सभी दृश्य बहुत अच्छे तरीके से सजाए प्रस्तर खण्ड पर प्राप्त किए गये हैं[3]। वाराणसी में भी कुछ ऐसे चित्र मन्दिरों में हैं। वैसे सारनाथ कला की कुछ मूर्तियाँ सारनाथ एवं भारतकला भवन के संग्रहालय में सुरक्षित है।

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भारत कला भवन में प्रदर्शित ऋष्यमूक पर्वत का दृश्य है[४]। यह कला अत्यन्त आकर्षित करता है। एक सुन्दर चौकोर प्रस्तर खण्ड पर उत्कीर्ण विशाल समुद्र (सेतुबन्ध) पर पुल बनाने का दृश्य है[५], इसमें राम और लक्ष्मण एक साथ बैठे हैं, उनके बाएँ हाथ में धनुष तथा दाहिने हाथ से बानरराज सुग्रीव को निर्देश देने का चित्र, एवं राम भक्त हनुमान को दिखाया गया है। बानरों के द्वारा बड़े-बड़े पत्थरों को ढोकर समुद्र में पुल बनाने का दृश्य इस तरह का चित्रण हमारे भारतीय कला में दुर्लभ है, अतएव यह प्रस्तर खण्ड काफी उपयोगी है। ऐसी ही खण्ड पट्टिका प्रयाग संग्रहालय में है, जिसमें लक्ष्मण, हनुमान तथा सुग्रीव बैठे हैं, राम तथा लक्ष्मण को मालाओं से सुसज्जित, पास में हनुमान और सुग्रीव भी है, अनुमान है कि यह दृश्य किष्किन्धा का हो सकता है। राम की प्रदर्शित यह शिल्पपट्ट क्षतिग्रस्त है, फिर भी अपनी कलात्मक छवि को संजोयी है, यह शिल्प श्रृंग्वेरपुर (प्रयाग) से प्राप्त की गयी है[६]।

सारनाथ की रामायण की कला गुप्तकाल के कलाकारों ने बहुत ही रोचक ढंग से प्रदर्शित किया है। राम के दृश्यों का अंकन सुन्दर प्रस्तर खण्ड पर जिसमें राम विषयक चित्रों में उल्लेखनीय है। कलाकार ने राम-लक्ष्मण के साथ अन्य पात्रों को भी प्रदर्शित किया है, सारनाथ संग्रहालय की यह पत्थर की पट्टिका का माप २′ × २″ एवं १′ × ११″ की है, जिस पर रामायण काल का एक दृश्य बना है, चित्र में राम सिंहासन पर बैठे हाथ में धनुष तथा सीने पर पट्टे बाँधे दिखाए गये हैं। उनकी सेवा में एक पुरुष खड़ा है, वह लक्ष्मण ही हो सकते हैं। राम के सामने हनुमान का बोध होता है। बन्दरों को संगठित होकर उमंग से गाने बजाने के भाव को कलाकार ने दिखलाया है। यह दृश्य सम्भवतः लंका के रावण के मरणोपरान्त विभिषण को राम के द्वारा लंका के राजा के रूप में राज्याभिषेक सम्बन्धित है, जो बलुएदार पत्थरों से बना है। उक्त दृश्य का अंकन अनुमानतः हिन्दू महाकाव्य रामायण का वह भाग को अंकित करता है, जिसमें राम के सहयोगी बानर के द्वारा रामेश्वरम् में पुल निर्माण जिस पर राम की सेना लंका में प्रवेश किया था उसी का दिग्दर्शन गुप्त युग के शिल्पियों ने प्रस्तुत किया है[८]।

इस तरह से सारनाथ कला में राम भक्ति का आख्यान दृश्य की झाँकी अन्य जगह की अपेक्षा सारनाथ से प्राप्त कलाकृतियों में भी देखी जा सकती है, इससे यह सिद्ध होता है कि कला में विशेष रूप से हिन्दू देव प्रतिमाओं को उकेर कर राम के द्वारा किया गया रोचक प्रसंग को समाज के बीच रखा गया जिससे धार्मिक भावना और भी उज्ज्वलित हो।

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RĀMAKATHĀ SCENES IN THE DADHIMATĪ TEMPLE AT GOṬH MĀNGLOḌ (RAJASTHAN)

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The old temple in the village Goṭh Mānglod (Nagaur district, Rajasthan), is dedicated to the *devī*, locally known as Dadhimatīmātā. It is a small building consisting of *garbhagṛha* (sanctum), *mukhālinda* (vestibule), *mukhacatuṣkī* (entrance-porch) and the *raṅgamaṇḍapa*. The temple, facing east, stylistically, and by virtue of its iconography, is assignable to *c.* 900–925 A.D. Besides the figures of the Dikpālas, Siṁhavāhinī-Ambikā, Gaṇeśa and Saptamātṛkās, the temple also contains beautiful narrative panels from the *Rāmāyaṇa*, to which the present paper is addressed (Fig. 1). The panels in question are carved in the tall *kaṇṭhā* on three sides excepting the front. The scenes are carved in sequence and illustrate the episodes of Mārīca-*vadha*, Sītā-*haraṇa*, *Setu-bandha*, duel between Vālī and Sugrīva and killing of Vālī by Rāma, fight between Lakṣmaṇa and Indrajita (Meghanāda), Lakṣmaṇa-*mūrchā* and lastly the decisive battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa. These episodes were indeed the most favoured in visual representations also at other early and contemporaneous sites.[1]

The depiction of the *Rāmāyaṇa* episodes in stone sculpture begins from the Gupta period, though in terracotta the beginning goes back to the second century B.C. The most important of the Gupta sites being Deogarh (Lalitpur district, U.P.), Nacnā (M.P.), Bhītargāoñ (Kanpur district, U.P.), Aphsaḍ (Nevada district, Bihar) and Nālandā (Bihar). During the subsequent centuries (*c.* A.D. 700–1600), the rendering of the *Rāmakathā* grew more popular everywhere.[2] Of all such regions, Karnataka undoubtedly occupies a very special position

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for yielding the largest number of sites and also for showing these episodes in vigorous and vivid manner. The Hoyasala temples at Halebiḍ, Amṛtāpur, Belūr, Somanāthapur and elsewhere are specially noteworthy for such renderings.

The selection of different episodes from the *Rāmakathā* and also their mode of representation faithfully reflect the contemporary life, mannerisms and cultural-equipment. Also in the episodes such as Mārīca-*vadha*, the fight between Lakṣmaṇa and Indrajita, or Rāma and Rāvaṇa and also the duel between Vālī and Sugrīva and the subsequent killing of Vālī by Rāma, the constant conflict between good and evil and the ultimate victory of good are graphically portrayed. They successfully represent the essence of the *Rāmāyaṇa* legends. On the other hand, the scenes of Sītā-*haraṇa* and the resistance of Jaṭāyu to Rāvaṇa are indicative of the esteem in which ancient Indians held women and also the consequence Rāvaṇa faced for showing disrespect towards women. The scenes suggestive of war, political exigencies, rift and betrayal were specially favoured since they actually characterise the political and social trends and *milieu* of the middle ages.

The narrative panels in the Dadhimatī temple, which run from the right to left, begins with the episode of Mārīca-*vadha*, a very popular subject of the *Rāmakathā* in visual representation. The scene, carved at the south face *kaṇṭhā*, starts with the figures of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, standing as ascetics with bow and arrow, along with Sītā.[3] Sītā points towards the leaping deer, demon Mārīca in disguise, as if asking for its skin. Close to this, another figure of Rāma, standing by the side of a tree and aiming at the golden deer, is also carved. Next to this, Rāma appears again with one of his hands raised in the *abhaya-mudrā* and with a kneeling animal-faced figure sitting before him with folded hands.[4] Further ahead, Rāma stands in *śarasandhāna* and the figure of the injured deer is also carved close, from the neck of which is emanating the demon Mārīca in human form with his hands being raised as

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if crying and uttering the name of Lakṣmaṇa before dying (Fig. 2). The artist here has successfully represented the final moment of the episode through the emanating figure of the demon. The present scene fully corresponds with the description of the Vālmīki's *Rāmāyaṇa* which refers to the emanation of demon Mārīca in human form from the body of the dear.[5] The episode of Mārīca-*vadha* in the *raṅgamaṇḍapa* of the Sun temple at Moḍherā (Mehasānā district, (Gujarat, *c.* 3rd quarter of the 11th century A.D.) is shown in identical manner.

The scenes ahead are carved in epical sequence. However, one aberration is that the episode of Mārica-*vadha* is carved repeatedly in the third register on the south after the scene of abduction of Sītā (Fig. 4). Rāma, wearing a *kaupīna* and *jaṭāmukuṭa*, stands in *śarasandhāna* with double *tūṇīra* (quiver) fastened to his shoulder. Rāma, here in profile, is shown in vigorous action, befitting the situation like that of the killing of a demon. Ahead is carved, the figure of an injured deer with the demon emerging from its neck. It is perhaps intended here to illustrate the particular moment when Rāma meets Lakṣmaṇa after the death of Mārīca and narrates the whole story of his betrayal by Mārīca with an intuition of the future eventuality to visit Sītā.[6] The narration here is like presenting the episode in a flash-back.

The scene in the second register on the south pertains to the episode of the abduction of Sītā (Fig. 3). The tableaux starts with the figure of Sītā sitting under a tree as if waiting for return of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa. Afterwards, Sītā appears as giving alms to Rāvaṇa, standing before her in disguise of a *parivrājaka*. The *Rāmāyaṇa* although refers to the appearance of Rāvaṇa before Sītā as an ascetic (*parivrājaka*),[7] does not specifically relate his begging for alms. He is also described as *bhikṣu* and *dvijāti* (brāhmin).[8] Further ahead, there appears the figure of five-faced Rāvaṇa in *vimāna* (aerial chariot) along with Sītā. (In visual representations only five frontal faces of the ten-faced Rāvaṇa are shown). The scene

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apparently relates to that moment when *Rāvaṇa* kidnaps Sītā and flies toward Laṅka.[9] The aerial movement of the *vimāna* is vividly suggested by its hovering over the tree tops. In neighbourhood is Lakṣmaṇa moving in the opposite direction in search of Rāma at the instance of Sītā. Lakṣmaṇa this way is also shown at the Sun temple at Moḍherā. It is narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that the names of Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā were loudly uttered by the dying demon Mārīca to mislead Sītā and Lakṣmaṇa into believing that Rāma was in trouble and thus to draw Lakṣmaṇa away from the guard of Sītā, to leave her alone to meet her fate at the hands of Rāvaṇa.[10]

The episode of the abduction of Sītā continues even in the third and the central panel (Fig. 4). In the beginning Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are shown meeting and Rama's narrating the happening. Next, three different but important points of the episode are combined in a telling manner. First, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa are shown wandering about in search of Sītā. This is followed by the fatally injured figure of Jaṭāyu, the eagle, downing its beak at the feet of Rāma, as though conveying him Sītā's abduction and his fatal encounter with Rāvaṇa for saving Sītā (Fig. 4). Beside Jaṭāyu, appears the multi-faced Rāvaṇa to suggest the fight between them. Above these figures is the *vimāna* carrying Rāvaṇa and Sītā.[11] Further ahead, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, armed with bow and arrow, are again depicted, searching for Sita. Two figures of a man and a woman respectively are shown kneeling before Rāma. These two persons are, however, could not be identified.

The fourth register contains the scenes of the piercing of seven *sāla* trees by Rāma (*sapta-sāla-bhedana*) to prove his prowess to Sugrīva and the fierce combat between the monkey chiefs Vālī and Sugrīva (Fig. 5).[12] In sculptural art the episode of Vālī-Sugrīva fight and the killing of Vāli by Rāma from a hiding place is usually combined with the episode of *sapta-sāla-bhedana* by Rāma, as evidenced by the instance in the Vārāhi temple at Chaurāsi (Orissa), the Kailāśa temple at Ellorā (Mahārāṣṭra), and the Hoyasala temples at Amṛtāpur,

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Halebid and Belūr (Karnataka). (In visual representation the *sāla* trees are always represented as tall and stately plam-*tāla*-trees). In such scenes, Rāma is shown aiming at Vāli from behind the seven palm trees. However, in the present instance, Rāma stands in *śarasandhāna* (Lakṣmaṇa standing by) aiming at the seven palm trees, carved in alignment. On the other end of the seven palm trees, a very realistic depiction of the progress of the mortal duel between Vāli and Sugriva is shown. The artist here has faithfully followed the details of the *Rāmāyaṇa*, according to which, Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa happened to meet Sugriva in the course of their wanderings in search of Sitā. Sugriva had taken shelter on the Ṛṣyamūka mountain because of the fear of his elder brother Vāli.[13] On being informed of the situation, Rāma asked Sugrīva to be free from fear thenceforth and also assured him of his help against Vāli. Rāma, as desired by Sugriva, had already demonstrated his enormous skill and power by piercing a row of seven aligned *sāla* trees with a single row.[14] After winning the confidence of Sugriva, Rāma asked him to enter into a duel with Vāli.[15] In the present scene, Vāli and Sugrīva are engaged in a fierce duel and are locked in a tight clasp. Sugriva, wearing a *gajapuṣpī* garland, however, stands on the farther side while the back of Vāli faces Rāma. The artist has here carved that particular moment of the episode when Rāma gets the convenient position for shooting at Vāli. It is stated in the *Rāmāyaṇa*,[16] that at the instance of Rāma Sugrīva wore a garland so that Rāma could easily differentiate between Vāli and Sugriva while fighting. However, same scene in the Śatrughneśwara temple (*c*. 7th century A.D.) at Bhubaneswara shows Rāma as giving a garland to Sugrīva, while in Bādāmi (Upper Śivālaya, *c*. 2nd quarter of the 7th century A.D.) Vāli and Sugriva both are wearing garlands. In the Siṁhanātha temple at Barambā (Orissā), the same episode is carved twice and with greater details showing also Tārā, the wife of Vāli, grieving over the dead body of her husband. The presence of a diminutive and frightened figure in the present scene watching the dreadful

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battle between the two brothers imparts realism to it. In the scene of *sapta-tāla-bhedana* and Vāli-*vadha* the artist has sought to emphasise Rāma's prowess by depicting his figure somewhat bigger in size than those of others and also by subtle suggestion of dynamic and crisp movement.

The fifth and the last panel on the south pertains to the prelude to the episode of *setu-bandha* wherein Rāma gives his counsel to others in that connection (Fig. 6). In the beginning, Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Sugrīva and other monkey chiefs are shown as engaged in an intensive discussion to find the means of crossing the ocean to reach Laṅkā. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa solemnly stand with bow and arrow. A monkey either Sugrīva or Hanumāna sits close to the feet of Rāma and offers his counsel in the matter.[17] Thereafter, Rāma appears as worshipping a Śiva-*liṅga* along with Lakṣmaṇa, and the *monkeys*, stand nearby. However, the *Ramāyaṇa* does not refer to the worship of Śiva-*liṅga* by Rāma. Hence, the present of Śiva-*liṅga* worship is apparently based on some later tradition, according to which Rāma worshipped Śiva-*liṅga* before the construction of the bridge over ocean (*setu-bandha*). The temple at Rāmeśwaram may have been inspired by this tradition.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* describes that Rāma had commanded the god of ocean to appear before him and provide a passage to his troops to Laṅkā. But the ocean god paid no heed to Rāma's quest. This made Rāma angry and he decided to dry-up ocean's waters with his arrows, so to teach him a lesson.[18] At this prospect of destruction the god of ocean appeared before Rāma with folded hands begging for mercy. This episode is shown in the next scene. Rāma is shown as discharging an arrow into the ocean. While he is about to shoot the arrow, the god of ocean, arrived with a *śakti*, his emblem, and accompanied by his consort in *añjali* emerges from the water and appears before Rāma. He raises his right hand in a gesture of praise for Rāma and begging for forgiveness. His wife has already

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assumed the worshipful pose of submission. The entire episode is carved in concurrence with the description of the *Rāmāyaṇa.*[19]

The five consecutive registers on the west pertains respectively to the episodes of (1) building the bridge (*setu-bandha*) across the ocean; (2) the consultation of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa with monkey chiefs regarding the strategy to attack Laṇkā; (3) the battle between Rāma and Indrajita; (4) the conference of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa, Vibhiṣaṇa and the monkey chiefs in regard to plans for killing Indrajita who is absorved in *sādhanā* (penance) for his victory over the enemies.

In the first scene, the monkeys are shown, engaged in building the bridge over the ocean (Fig. 7). These figures, skilfully arranged in a row, are seen moving with blocks of stone on their heads. The last two figures are busy with the actual building work. However one of these figures must be Nala who being the son of Viśvakarmā was expert in all the *śilpas* and entrusted with the responsibility of the construction work. (The presence of even a baby monkey with a block of stone on his head makes the present scene very lively.) The scene, carved as it is in accordance with the description of the Rāmāyaṇa, thus narrates the episode of crossing the ocean by Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and their army of monkeys by way of suggestion.[20] In the second register Rāma (who now wears a *jaṭāmukuṭa* and holds a long arrow), is sitting before a tree on a block of stone (Fig. 8). Lakṣmaṇa sits on the floor near Rāma. His face is turned towards Rāma indicate that he was listening to him very intently, supporting his titled head on one of his hands. Rāma is here surrounded by as many as eight monkeys, both sitting and standing and holding branches of trees and other objects. The monkeys, in vigorous actions, are also listening attentively to Rāma. The scene perhaps suggests that Rāma after crossing the ocean, is finalizing the strategy of of his impending attack on Laṅkā.[21]

The third and the central register accommodates two different episodes of the *Rāmakathā.* On the right side, the

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five-faced Ravaṇa, holding spear, shield and goad, is sitting on a horse chariot (Fig. 9).[22] The figures around Rāvaṇa, in profile, are engaged actively in fighting. A few monkey figures bearing branches of trees are running away in fear while some others are holding the rein of the horse chariot of Rāvaṇa to prevent its progress. It is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that, after his army chief, Prahasta, was killed Rāvaṇa himself came to the battlefield.[23] The second episode, carved just close to the figure of Rāvaṇa, relates to the fierce fighting between Rāma and Indrajita (Fig. 9). It is mentioned in the *Rāmāyaṇa* that Rāvaṇa was forced to leave the battlefield after a brief engagement with Rāma.[24] Upon his return, Rāvaṇa sent Kumbhakarṇa and Indrajita in succession to the battlefield. In the present scene Rāma stands without any chariot while Indrajita is shown mounted on a chariot. Both are in *śarasandhāna*. They are assisted respectively by the armies of monkeys and demons wielding different weapons. The *Rāmāyaṇa*, describing in detail the fighting between Rāma and Indrajita, also relates that both Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa became unconcious by the onslaught through the deadly arrows of Indrajita. It is also mentioned that after regaining consciousness Rāma again fought Indrajita in battle. The present scene perhaps is related to that specific battle between the two. In the next panel, Rāma is sitting under a tree along with Lakṣmaṇa and the monkey chiefs. He is perhaps discussing his next move to kill Indrajita (Fig, 10, right).

The fifth and the last register shows Indrajita performing a rigorous *yajña* before Agni for victory (Fig. 10, left). He is offering *havya* with a *sruk* into the fire altar. The *Rāmāyaṇa* distinctly narrates that, after returning from the battlefield Indrajita went to the Nikumbhilā temple to perform *yajña* to obtain victory in battle against the army of Rāma.[25] It is further recommended that, on the counsel of Vibhiṣaṇa, Rāma asked Lakṣmaṇa to kill Indrajita during the course of his *homa* as otherwise he would become invincible.[26] However, in the version shown here, both the performance of *homa* by Indrajita

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and his subsequent fight with Lakṣmaṇa and his army of monkeys are carved together in a very realistic manner. On being disturbed in the course of his performance, Indrajita got enraged and came back to the battlefield in a chariot. He was, however, killed by Lakṣmaṇa.[27] The scene here graphically represents the final moment of war when Lakṣmaṇa is shown in *śarasandhānā* in a dynamic posture as though to shoot the arrow, received from Indra (*aindrāstra*) at Indrajita to bring out his destruction. Indrajita is shown as falling on the chariot after being fatally injured. His head, cut by the arrow, is also about to fall on the ground. The chariot with the injured figures of the charioteer and horses is also somewhat disbalanced. Such a detailed depiction of the fight of Indrajita, including his performance of *homa*, is rarely met with elsewhere.

The scenes on the north include the episodes of (1) the battle of the demons and Rāma-Lakṣmaṇa; (2) Lakṣmaṇa-*mūrchā*; (3) the fierce battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa; (4) the victory of Rāma and lastly ; (5) the return of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā to Ayodhyā. In the beginning, the vigorous battle between Rāma and the demons is shown (Fig. 11, right).[28] Rāma is accompanied by the armies of monkeys, fighting the demons with branches of trees and blocks of stone. Lakṣmaṇa, however, stands calmly behind Rāma as if watching the episode. The head of the demon chief who possesses a massive body is out up by the arrows of Rāma and his body is about to fall. Ahead is shown a demon, not identifiable, along side a female, sitting close to his feet. A few monkeys are seen climbing over the body of these figures.

The second register accommodates the episode of Lakṣmaṇa-*mūrchā* which indeed was one of the most favoured topics of depiction from the *Rāmāyaṇa* in visual art (Fig. 11, left).[29] The *Rāmāyaṇā* narrates that Lakṣmaṇa became unconscious in the battlefield as a result of the injuries caused by the *śakti* hurled by Rāvaṇa.[30] In the present scene, the artist chose that particular moment of the episode which generates deep

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pathos, showing everybody in a state of shock. The unconscious body of Lakṣmaṇa is lying in the lap of Rāma, full of grief and sitting under a tree.[31] He is flanked by monkeys who are discussing among themselves the means to revive Lakṣmaṇa. The monkey sitting close to Lakṣmaṇa and touching his feet, is none other than Hanumāna, while the other figure may be identified with the great physician Suṣeṇa who had been brought for the treatment of Lakṣmaṇa and on whose advice Hanumāna brought medicinal plant *(sanjīvanī)* from the Mahodaya mountain.[32]

The third scene depicts the last battle of Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa against Rāvana (Fig. 12, right). The army of monkeys arrived with branches of tree, and the demons mostly with sword and *daṇḍā*, are also dreadfully fighting. Rāma and Lakṣmaṇa, shown in *śarasandhāna* without chariot, are aiming at Rāvaṇa wielding sword, bow, arrow and other weapons. He rides on a horse chariot. The entire scene seems very realistic as a result of the presence of several other figures, some fataly injured or falling in the battlefield.[33] The same episode continues in the next register wherein Rāma has also been provided with a chariot, which, according to the *Rāmāyaṇa*, is the one sent by Indra to help him in this war against Rāvaṇa (Fig. 12, central).[34] Rāma, in *śarasandhāna*, aims at Rāvaṇa whose chariot along with the horses has already been destroyed by the former. Rāma has cut all the nine heads of Rāvaṇa, excepting the last one. Of these atleast eight heads are strewn all around.[35] However, the last head has also received fatal injuries and is almost half out. Rāvaṇa, holding bow, arrow and sword, is rendered helpless at this moment of his life. The entire depiction is suggestive of the tragic end of Rāvaṇa.[36]

The last scene in the fifth register shows Rāma along with Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā, standing close to a palatial building. This may, however, be identified with the scene of their return to Ayodhyā (Fig, 12, left). In the Siṁhanātha temple at Barambā (Orissā), the return of Rāma, Lakṣmaṇa and Sītā to Ayodhyā is shown by their seated figures in a palace.

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From the foregoing it is apparent that the carvers at Goṭh Mānglod have chosen the most popular episodes from the *Rāmakathā*. The technique of presentation is a happy combination of depiction of individual events, and a succession of scenes to show the progressive scenes of the same event wherever the subject has lent itself to such dramatic presentation and treatment. The repeated rendering of the episode of Mārīca-*vadha* is an appreciable attempt of the artist for a flash back depiction along with the narration of the incident by Rāma to Lakṣmaṇa. The deeply cut and skilfully modelled figures show different movements in realistic and animated manner. The figures, even in groups, retain their individuality both in action and expression. The dynamic mobility of the figures, specially in the battle scenes, and also the appropriate communication of different situations of perplexity, solace and deep strategic discussions are done with gusto and perfection. The episode of ***setu-bandha***, Lakṣmaṇa-*mūrchā* and the Vālī-Sugrīva combat are indeed the best illustrations of these features.

Needless to emphasize, the artist was guided by the version of Vālmīki, which only shows that this version held great sway over the minds of the people in the north-western part of Rajasthan till the early 10th century A.D., though by this time many other versions had appeared. The choice of events for visual depiction shows a predilection for the triumph of good over evil, which has underscored didactic narrative art in India from the very beginning.

Foot Note

1. The principal sites of early medieval and medieval times with the Rāmakathā panels are the Śatrughneśvara and the Svrṇajāleśvara temples (*c.* 7th century A.D.) at Bhubanesvara, the Simhanātha temple (*c.* 8th century A.D.) at Barambā and the Vārāhī temple at Chaurāsī (Orissā), the Upper Sivālaya (*c.* 7th century A.D.) at Bādāmī the Pāpanātha and the Virūpkākṣa temples (7th–8th century A.D.) at Paṭṭaḍakal (Karnataka), the Kailāśa temple (8th century A.D.) at Ellorā (Maha raṣtra), Nālandā (*c.* 7th century A.D.) (Bihar), the Lakṣmaṇa (*c.*

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950 A.D), the Pārśvanātha (*c.* 950-70 A.D.) and the Kandariā Mahādeo (*c.* 1025-50 A.D.) temples at Khajurāho (M.P.), the Sun temple (*c.* 3rd quarter of the 11th century A.D.) at Moḍherā (Gujrat), the Chennakesava temple (A.D. 1117) at Belūr, the Amṛteśvara temple (A.D. 1196) at Amṛtāpur, the Śāntaleśvera, the Hoyasaleśvara and the Kedareśvara temples (*c.* 12th-13th century A.D.) at Halebiḍ, the Keśava temple (A.D. 1268) at Somanāthapur (Karnataka), and the Viṣṇu temple (*c.* 16th century A.D.) at Kāñchīpuram (Tamilnadu).

2. For detailed studies on the *Rāmakatha* in art please consult : Sengupta, R., 'Scenes of Rāmāyaṇa on two Terracottas of Pre-Christian date', *Jour. of Andhra Historical Research Society*, Vol. XXXII, P. T. S. 174 (1971-72), p.1; Sivaramamurti, C., 'The Rāmāyaṇa in Indian Sculpture', *The Ramayana Tradition in Asia*, V. Raghavan, (Ed.), Madras, 1980, pp. 636-47, Krshna Deva, 'Gopta Rāmāyaṇa Panels from Nachnā', *Chhavi*-2, Varanasi, 1981, pp. 10-14; 'Stone Temple (No. 2) at Nālandā', *Jour. of Indian Society of Oriental Art*, New Series, Vol. XI, pp. 80-84, Sinha, B.P., 'Representation of Rāmāyaṇa Scenes in an old Temple Wall at Aphsaḍ', *Jour. of Bihar Research Society*, Vol. LIV, Parts I-IV, p. 217, pl. XVIII, figs. 2-3. Agrawala, R. C. 'Rāmāyaṇa Scenes in Rajasthan Sculptures', *Indian Historical Quarterly*, Vol. 30, No. 2, June 1954, pp. 154-59; Vatsyayana, Kapila, *Rāmāyaṇa in the Arts of Asia*, Teheran, 1975; Banerjee, P., *Rāma in Indian Literature, Art and Thought*, 2 Vols., Delhi, 1986.

3. *Rāmāyṇa*, (Vālmīki), *Araṇyakāṇḍa* 43.1-4.
4. However, the context of the present scene is not explicable.
5. For details see *Araṇyakāṇḍa* 44.13-21.
   Mṛiyamāṇastu mārīco jaau tāṁ kritṛimāṁ tanum/*Araṇyakāṇḍa* 44.17.
   mṛgarūpaṁ tu tat tyaktvā rākṣasaṁ rūpamāsthitaḥ/*Araṇyakāṇḍa* 44.20.
6. *Araṇyakāṇḍa* 57.22-23.
7. tadāsādya deśagrīvaḥ kṣipramantaramāsthitaḥ/abhicakrāma vaidehīṁ parivrājakarūpadhṛik/*Araṇyakāṇḍa* 64.2.
8. upatasthe ca vaidehīṁ bhikṣurūpeṇa Rāvaṇaḥ/abhavyo bhavyarūpeṇa bhartāramanuśocatīni/*Araṇyakāṇḍa* 46.9.
9. *Araṇyakāṇḍa* 49.19-23. However, one of the pillars in *raṅgamaṇḍapa* of the Sun temple at Moḍherā also shows Rāvaṇa taking away Sītā in *vimāna* (aerial chariot).
10. *Araṇyakāṇḍa*, 44.19.
11. The episodes of the fight between Rāvaṇa and Jaṭāyu and Rāvaṇa carrying Sītā in *vimāna* have also been represented in detail in the eastern pillar of the *raṅgamaṇḍapa*, in the Sun temple at Moḍherā.

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12. *Rāmāyaṇa, Kiṣkindhakaṇḍa, sarga* 11–12.
13. *Kiṣkindhakāṇḍa* 11.7-65.
14. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* 11.90–91, 12.1–3.
15. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* 12.13.
16. *Kiṣkindhākāṇḍa* 12.38–40.
17. Laṅghanarthaṁ ca ghorasya samudrasya nadīpateḥ/sahāsmābhirihopetaḥ sūkṣmabuddhirvicāraya/*Rāmāyaṇa, Yuddhakāṇḍa* 2.20.
18. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 21.25–26.
19. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 22.1–29.
20. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 22.22–80
21. However, the *Yuddhakāṇḍa* elaborately describes asto the planning of Rāma to attack Laṅkā in different context.
22. However, the Rāmāyaṇa refers to Rāvaṇa as ten-headed and twenty-armed. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 102.36.
23. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 59.1–11.
24. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 59.143–45.
25. See for detail *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 82.25–27, *sarga* 84–85.
26. *Yuddhakāḍṇḍa* 85.21–22.
27. pramathyendrajitaḥ kāyāt pātayāmāsa bhūtale/*Yuddhakāṇḍa* 90.71.
28. *Yuddhakāṇḍa, sarga* 93.
29. The important examples of Lakṣmaṇa-*mūrchā* are in the Sun temple at Moḍherā, Sās temple at Nāgdā (Udaipur, Rajasthan), Amṛteśvara temple at Amṛtāpur and Chennakeśava temple at Belūr. The episode is more or less carved in the identical manner.
30. Rāvaṇena raṇe śaktiḥ kruddhenāśīviṣopamā/muktāss śūrasyabhītasya Lakṣmaṇasya mamajja sā/*Yuddhakāṇḍa* 100.34.

    ṭado Rāvaṇavegena sudūramavagāḍhayā/saktyā vibhinuahṛdayaḥ papāta bhuvi Lakṣmaṇaḥ/*Yuddhakāṇḍa* 100.36.
31. In visual representations Lakṣmaṇa is always shown as lying unconscious in the lap of Rāma, but the *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions that he was lying unconscious in the battlefield and Rāma was fighting with Rāvaṇa at that time.
32. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 101.30–32.
33. *Yuddhakāṇḍa*, sarga 95–99.
34. rathena mama bhūmiṣṭhaṁ śighraṁ yāhi raghūttamaṁ/āhūya bhūtalaṁ yātaḥ kuru devahitaṁ mahat/*Yuddhakāṇḍa* 102.7.

    For detail see *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 102,5–12.
35. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 107.54–57.

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36. The *Rāmāyaṇa* mentions that Rāma used *amogha* (unconquerable) *brahmāstra* (arrow of Brahmā) against Rāvaṇa to kill him. *Yuddhakāṇḍa* 108.1–22.

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रामायण-चित्रकला एवं मूर्तिकला के सन्दर्भ में

श्री भगवान सिंह, एम०ए०, पी-एच०डी०

महर्षि वाल्मीकिप्रणीत रामायण भारतीय काव्य साहित्य के इतिहास में ही नहीं बल्कि दुनिया के साहित्य के इतिहास में प्रथम रचना है जो किसी वंश को आधार मान कर तत्कालीन घटनाओं तथा सम्पूर्ण व्यवस्था पर प्रकाश डालती है। आदि कवि वाल्मीकि राम कालीन कवि हैं। रामायण से स्पष्ट है, वाल्मीकि रामकथा से सीधे जुड़े हुये हैं। चित्रकूट में राम वनगमन के समय या अपने आश्रम में निर्वासित सीता को सान्त्वना के साथ रखने में तथा कुश-लव के प्रथम चरित्र निर्माण में अहम भूमिका निभायी थी। ये तथ्य रामायण में द्रष्टव्य है। राम की यात्राओं तथा मार्ग के सभी घटनाओं, युद्धों आदि की जानकारी की स्रोत सीता थी जो बराबर वाल्मीकि को बताती रही होंगी। सीता के निर्वासित जीवन से वाल्मीकि को प्रेरणा मिली होगी। अतः वाल्मीकि ही रामकथा को साधिकार अपनी लेखनी से व्यक्त कर सकते थे। प्रथमबार भारतीय साहित्य में एक वंश की वंशावली युक्त सविस्तार विवरण प्रस्तुत किया गया। ब्रह्मा-मनु, प्रजापति से लेकर प्रमुख इक्ष्वाकु, सगर, भागीरथ, रघु, अज तथा उनके पुत्र दशरथ तक एक लम्बी वंशावली युक्त चित्रण किया गया (बाल० ७०, १९-४३, अयो० ११०-३-३४) इनमें इक्ष्वाकु प्रतापी राजा थे। इसलिये इन्हीं के नाम पर इस वंश का इक्ष्वाकुवंश नाम पड़ा। इक्ष्वाकुवंश में यह परम्परा थी कि ज्येष्ठ पुत्र का ही राजा के पद पर अभिषेक होता था (अयो० ११०/३६)। वाल्मीकि ने इसी वंश की रामायण में व्याख्या की है। इससे प्रभावित होकर महान कवि कालिदास ने इस रघुवंश का अपने रघुवंशम् में उल्लेख किया। भवभूति, भाष, तुलसीदास ने रामचरितमानस की रचना कर इस परम्परा को आगे बढ़ाया। ऐसा प्रतीत होता है इसी परम्परा से प्रभावित होकर मध्यकालीन साहित्यकारों ने बाबरनामा, हुँमायुनामा, अकबरनामा, जहाँगीरनामा, शाहनामा आदि ग्रंथों की रचनायें की। ये रचनायें मुगलवंश के इतिहास तथा संस्कृति की जानकारी के मूलस्रोत हैं। अब यहाँ रामायण को मूलस्रोत मानकर उसमें वर्णित चित्रकला तथा मूर्तिकला के सन्दर्भ में जो विवरण मिलता है उसी के परिप्रेक्ष्य में अध्ययन समीचीन है।

वाल्मीकि रामायण में वास्तु-कला, संगीत रंगमंच, नृत्य, स्थापत्य, चित्रकला एवं मूर्तिकला के विषय में पर्याप्त सामग्री है। नगर की रचना, मन्दिरों, देवायतन, दुर्ग विविध प्रासादों का वर्णन, अलंकरणों से युक्त स्तम्भ सात-आठ मञ्जिले शिला-गृह, भवनों, कक्षों, शिखरों, सोपानों, चैत्य-प्रासाद आदि का वर्णन, इटों, पत्थरों का प्रयोग विकसित उच्च संस्कृति के विकास के लक्षणों को प्रमाणित करते हैं।

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रामायण में चित्रकला का विवरण अनेक रूपों में द्रष्टव्य है। यह दीवारों, कक्षों, रथों, भवनों आदि के अलंकरण रूप में किया गया है। वाल्मीकि ने चित्रशाला-गृहाणि (५-९-३६) का उल्लेख किया है। स्पष्ट है उस समय विवध प्रकार की चित्रशालायें थीं। राजाओं के राजमहलों में तथा अन्तःपुर में रानियों की निजी चित्रशालायें हुआ करती थीं।

राजा चित्रकला तथा शिल्पकला का पारखी होता था। राम चित्रकला एवं शिल्प के विशेषज्ञ कहे गये हैं (२-१-२८)। रानियों का चित्रकला से बहुत ही प्रेम था। कैकेयी का राजप्रासाद सुन्दर चित्र-गृहों से अलंकृत था। उस भवन में तोते, मोर, क्रौञ्च और हंस आदि पक्षी कलरव कर रहे थे। वहाँ वाद्यों का मधुर घोष गूँज रहा था। चम्पा और अशोक से सुशोभित लताचित्र चित्रमन्दिर महल की शोभा बढ़ा रहे थे।

लतागृहैश्चित्रगृहैश्चम्पकाशोक शोभितै (२१०-११-१३) चम्पक पुष्पादि से सुशोभित हाथी दाँत, चाँदी, सोने के बने उत्तम आसनों से रत्नभूषणादि, इन्द्रपुरी के समान, समृद्धिमान् अन्तःपुर का कैकेयी भवन सजा हुआ था। स्पष्ट है रानियों के अन्तःपुर में भवनों को अलंकृत किया जाता था। उसपर भाँति-भाँति के दृश्य, फूल पत्ती पेड़, पौधों, पशु-पक्षी को अंकित कर भवन की भित्तियों को अलंकृत कर, शुशोभित किया जाता था। यह परम्परा आगे भारतीय चित्रकारों को प्रभावित करती रही है।

रानियों के साथ-साथ राजा भी चित्रकला के प्रेमी थे। राम का राजप्रासाद सोने की मूर्तियों से युक्त मणि, मूँगा आदि से सजा, मणिमाओं आदि से अलंकृत अनेक कल्पित मृगों से युक्त भित्ति-चित्र से अलंकृत था। (सूत्कीर्ण भक्तिभिस्तथा २.१५.३०-३७)।

अयोध्या के समान लंका का भी राजप्रासाद विविध दृष्यों तथा चित्रों से सुशोभित था। रावण ने अपनी अशोक वाटिका में एक सुन्दर चित्रशाला बनवा रखा था। हनुमान ने अशोक वाटिका उजाड़ते समय इस लतामण्डप तथा चित्रशाला को उजाड़ दिया था (लतागृहैश्चित्रगृहैश्च ६-४०-१९)। रावण के अशोक वाटिका में हनुमान ने मद्य एवं सुरा रखने के लिये चित्र-विचित्र अतिमूल्यवान वर्त्तन भी देखे थे। रावण के अन्तःपुर में हनुमान ने राक्षसलोग द्वारा सुन्दर रूपवाले चित्रों का निर्माण करते देखा था (५-५ १२)। रावण के भवन में अनेक प्रकार की पालकियाँ विचित्र लतागृह, चित्रशालाएँ आदि भी देखे थे (५-७-३६)। लंकापुरी के बाहरी फाटक सोने के बने हुये थे और उनकी दीवारें लता-वेलों के चित्र से सुशोभित थीं (५-२ १८)। गृहों में कोई कमल के आकार का था, तो कोई स्वस्तिक के चिन्ह या आकार से युक्त और कोई निर्माण वर्धमानसंज्ञक गृहों के रूप में था (५-४-७)। रावण की हवेली चितकबरी आनन्द देने वाली तथा शोभा को सुशोभित करनेवाली थी। कालीन पर बैठी हुई सुन्दरी, स्त्रियाँ रंग-विरंगी वस्त्र, पुष्पमाला धारण किये

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अनेक प्रकार की वेष-भूषाओं से विभूषित थीं (५-९-३३)। स्पष्ट है विविध रंगो से सजाये हुये वस्त्र स्त्रियाँ धारण करती थीं। पुष्पक विमान भी सुवर्ण के समान लाल रंग के सुगन्धयुक्त चन्दन से संयुक्त होने के कारण वह बालसूर्य के समान जान पड़ता था (५-९-१८)। रावण के सोने का पलंग स्फटिक मणिकी, रत्नों से जड़ा, पाटी-पाये सुवर्ण जटित होने के कारण चितकबरे, पलंग पर बहुमूल्य बिछौने बिछाये गये थे। वह अग्नि के समान देदीप्यमान, अशोक पुष्पों की मालाओं से अलंकृत था। भेड़ की खाल मढ़ी हुई सब ओर से उत्तम फूलों की मालाओं से सुशोभित था (५-१०-१-६)।

रावण के पुष्पक विमान में तरह-तरह के चित्र बने हुये थे। यह रत्नों से विभूषित देदीप्यमान था। भाँति-भाँति के वृक्षों के फूलों से आच्छादित पुष्प पराग से भरे हुये पर्वत, शिखर के समान सुशोभित था। हंसों द्वारा आकाश में ढोये जाते हुए विमान की भाँति जान पड़ता था। शिखर पर्वत, ग्रहों चन्द्रमा के कारण तथा अनेक वर्णों से युक्त होने के कारण मेघ विचित्र शोभा पा रहा था। सोने और मणियों से निर्मित कृत्रिम पर्वत-मालाओं से पूर्ण, पर्वत वृक्षों की विस्तृत पक्तियों से हरे-भरे रचे गये थे। वे पुष्प भी केसर एवं पंखुड़ियों से पूर्ण निर्मित हुये थे। केसर युक्त कमल विचित्र वन और अद्भुत सरोवरों का भी निर्माण किया गया था। वह हेम पद्मों से सुसज्जित, चाँदी और मूगों के पक्षी रत्नों से सर्पों की रचना तथा उसमें सुन्दर घोड़े निर्मित थे (५-७-६-१३)। उसके फर्स भी चित्रों से सजाये जाते थे। निश्चय ही ये सारे प्रसंग, विषय, बाद के चित्रकारों के लिये आधार सामग्री बनी। मध्यकालीन भारतीय चित्रकला में रामायण का भरपूर प्रभाव है। पशु, पक्षी, पुष्प लताएँ, वृक्ष, वन आदि के दृश्य रामायण में चित्रांकित हैं, जिसका आधार भारतीय चित्रकारों ने लिया है। अजन्ता की चित्रकला में ऐसे कई दृश्य हैं।

रामायण में लकड़ी की बनी वस्तुओं पर भी चित्रों का उल्लेख मिलता है। वाली का शव सुन्दर चित्रों से सजाई हुई पालकी में श्मशान भूमि ले जाया गया था (४-२४)। इसी तरह रावण का शव भी सुन्दर पुष्पचित्रित रथ में ले जाया गया (६-१११-१०९)।

लंका में हनुमान ने सीता को लतामण्डपों, चित्रशालाओं, आपानशाला, पुष्पगृह, क्रीड़ागृह, गृहाद्यान की गलियों और पुष्पक विमान आदि में खोजा था (५-१२-१,१३,१४)। लंका के तोरण वेल-बूटों से सुशोभित था। लतापक्ति विराजिते (५-२-१८)। सुवर्ण भूषित रथों पर भी तरह-तरह के दृश्य बनाये जाते थे। मृगों सिहों के मुख से सुसज्जित पिशाचवदन से चित्रित थे। रंग-विरंगे कालीन भी बनाये जाते थे। पलंग अलंकृत किये जाते थे। रत्नों से जड़े वस्तुओं आदि की विस्तृत चर्चा की गई है। हनुमान ने एक ही पीले रंग के पुराने रेशमी वस्त्र से ढकी हुई सीता को देखा था (५-१५-२१)। वर्तन भी तरह-तरह के चित्र-विचित्र, अति

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मूल्यवान प्रयोग में लाये जाते थे। दृष्टव्य है चित्रकला के सन्दर्भ में रामायण एक पूर्ण विकसित उच्चकोटि की सांस्कृतिक, वैभव से परिपूर्ण है।

मूर्तिकला अथवा देव प्रतिमाओं के चर्चा के पहले रामायण में वर्णित देव-स्थान एवं देवपूजा पर ध्यान देना आवश्यक प्रतीत होता है। रामायण में अनेक स्थानों पर देव-मन्दिरों का उल्लेख हुआ है। देवतागार, देवपथ, देवस्थान, देवगृह देवायतन, देवतायान आदि नामों की चर्चा की गयी है। महाराज दशरथ की नववधुओं के मिथिला से अयोध्या आने पर अन्तपुर की रानियों ने देवमन्दिरों में उनकी पूजा करवायी थी (१-७७-१३)। स्पष्ट है देव पूजन के निमित्त अन्तःपुर में मन्दिर निर्मित थे। राम के राज्याभिषेक का सुखद समाचार पाकर अयोध्यावासी हिमालय के शिखर के समान ऊँचे देव-मन्दिरों पर ध्वजाएँ तथा पताकाएँ फहराने लगे थे (२-६-११–३)। स्वयं रामने यौवराज्याभिषेक के पहले दिन सीता के साथ संयम पूर्वक विष्णु मंदिर में शयन किया था (२-६-४)। वनगमन के समय राम द्वारा माता कौशल्या से आज्ञा मागने पर कौशल्या राम से कहती हैं वे सब देबता महर्षियों के साथ वन में तुम्हारी रक्षा करें (२-२५-४)। भगवान स्कन्ददेव, सोम, वृहस्पति सप्तर्षिगण और नारद सभी तुम्हारी रक्षा करें। साथ ही साथ इन्द्र, नदी, वेदियों, मन्दिरों, पर्वत, वृक्ष, जलाशय, पक्षी, सर्प सिंह, सिद्धगण, दिशाएँ, दिकपाल, समुद्र, वरुण द्युलोक, अन्तरिक्ष, पृथ्वी, वायु, चराचर प्राणी, नक्षत्र, देवताओं सहित ग्रह, शुक्र, सूर्य, कुबेर, यम, अग्नि, शिव, भूतगण, सभी देवता एवं दैत्य आदि से प्रार्थना करती हैं तथा राम की वन यात्रा मङ्गलकारी हो, अग्नि में हवन कर पूजा करती है (२-२५-१-४६)। अपने वनगमन में चित्रकूट में भी राम अयोध्या के मन्दिरों को याद करते रहते हैं। पर्णकुटी निर्मित कर पर्णशाला के अधिष्ठाता देव की पूजा कर पर्णकुटी में प्रवेश करते हैं (२-५-२१-३०)। ऋषि मुनियों के आश्रम में भी मन्दिर बने हुये थे। अगस्त्य मुनि के आश्रम में विभिन्न देवताओं के लिये पृथक स्थान बने हुये थे (२-१२-१६-२०)। रास्ते के मन्दिरों की प्रदक्षिणा की जाती थी। लंका में भी चैत्य प्रासाद थे। हजार खम्भोंवाला, गोलाकार, कैलास के समान श्वेतवर्ण और बहुत ऊँचा देदीप्यमान अशोकवाटिका में हनुमान को चैत्य प्रासाद दिखाई पड़ा था (५-१५-१४-१७)। सुन्दर काण्ड (५-२४-४५-४७) में इसी तरह राक्षसी द्वारा सुरा के साथ मनुष्य के मांस का आस्वादन करके 'निकुम्भिला' देवी के सामने नृत्य की बातें कही गयी हैं। ये सभी तथ्य मन्दिरों के साथ ही साथ मूर्तियों के अस्तित्व को दर्शाते हैं।

रामायण में कई स्थानों पर वेदों की चर्चा की गयी है। वेदवेत्ता ब्राह्मणों से दशरथ प्रसन्न रहते थे (१-७७-२३-२४)। श्री राम तथा कुश लव वेदों के पारंगत थे (२-१-२०-१-४-५-६)। रावण का दाह-संस्कार वैदिक विधि से हुआ था (६-३-११७)। वैदिक देवों की बार-बार प्रार्थनायें की गयी हैं। माता कौसल्या राम के वनगमन के मंगलमय तथा रक्षा के लिये अन्तरिक्ष, द्युलोक, पृथिवी के सभी देवों

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की प्रार्थना करती है (२-२५-१३-१४)। इन्द्र, वरुणा अग्नि की बार-बार पूजा की गयी है। देव पूजन के लिये गंध, पुष्प, नैवेद्य, धूप दीप आदि पूजन सामग्री का उल्लेख है। कौसल्या और राम ने अनेक बार देव पूजा की। मनुष्य जो स्वयं अन्न खाता है, देवता भी ग्रहण करते हैं, कहा गया है (२-१०३-३०)। वन में विचरने वाले मुनि सहित समस्त देवता, दैत्य, जन्तुओं, पशुओं तथा शिव आदि देवताओं की प्रार्थनायें हैं। इसके साथ ही साथ विधि पूर्वक यज्ञ कर अग्नि होम करके हवन से बचे हुये हविष्य के द्वारा होम की वेदी से बाहर दशो दिशाओं में इन्द्र आदि लोकपालों के लिये बलि अर्पित है (२-२५)। वेदों के पारङ्गत ब्राह्मण धार्मिक अनुष्ठान, अभिषेक आदि किया करते थे (२-२६-१३)। विष्णु के साथ-साथ शिव की पूजा की जाती थी (२-२५-४३)। राम और रावण दोनों ही शिव की पूजा में बड़ी श्रद्धा रखते हैं। राम लंका से लौटते हुये सीता को सेतुबाँध दिखाते हैं जहाँ भगवान शिव ने उन पर कृपा की थी (६-१२३-२०)। ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, शिव, स्कन्द, प्रजापति, इन्द्र, कुबेर, काल, यम, चन्द्रमा वरुणा, पितर, वसु, सान्ध, अश्विनीकुमार, मरुद्गण, मनु, वायु, अग्नि, प्रजा, प्राण ऋतुओं को प्रकट करने वाले तथा प्रभा के पुञ्ज कहे गये हैं (६-१०५-८९)। सूर्यदेव दिन के आधिपति, ज्योतिगणों के स्वामी की बार-बार प्रार्थनायें की गयी हैं। रावण के साथ युद्ध में थके, चिन्तित रणभूमि में खड़े राम को अगस्त्यमुनि ने सूर्य की ही आराधना कर "आदित्यहृदय" स्तोत्र का जप करने को कहा था। क्योंकि इस जप से सदा विजय हाथ लगती है (६-१०५-१-३०)। राम ने इसे तीन बार जप किया और युद्ध में आ डटे। रामायण में वैदिक देवताओं के साथ ही साथ अन्य गौड़ देवताओं अष्टदिकपाल, विश्वकर्मा, नक्षत्र, कामदेव आदि की भी यथास्थान चर्चा की गयी है।

रामायण में मन्दिरों के अस्तित्व के साथ ही साथ देवों की पूजा तथा देव-प्रतिमाओं के निमित्त प्रर्याप्त सामग्री मिलती है। इन देव प्रतिमाओं को मन्दिर में स्थापित कर पूजा की जाती थी। मन्दिर अन्तःपुर, सड़क के किनारे, चौराहों आदि पर निर्मित किये जाते थे (२-३-१८)। राम का भवन देव प्रतिमाओं से अलंकृत था (२-१५-३२,३३ ३५,३६)। भरत ननिहाल से लौटकर देखते हैं, अयोध्या उदास है देवालय तथा चैत्य हीन दशा में दिखाई दे रहे थे (२-४२-४३)। देव प्रतिमाओं की पूजा बन्द हो गयी थी (२-७१-४०)। कारण स्पष्ट था राम का २७ वर्ष की उम्र में सीता, लक्ष्मण सहित वनवास हो गया था (२-२०-४५)। महाराज दशरथ स्वर्ग सिधार गये थे तथा सारी अयोध्या शोक में डूब गयी थी।

वाल्मीकि रामायण में देव प्रतिमाओं की ही चर्चा नहीं की गई है अपितु देवताओं का मानवीकरण कर उनके लाक्षणिक स्वरूपों का पूर्ण चित्रण प्राप्त है। ब्रह्म लोकस्रष्टा हैं (२-१६-२२)। ब्रह्मा को चतुर्मुख कहा गया है (१-२-२३ तथा ७-५-१२)। शिल्प में ब्रह्मा चतुर्मख ही पाये जाते हैं। विष्णु, शंख, चक्र एवं गदा के साथ अनेक स्थानों पर दर्शाये गये हैं (२-२-२३ तथा ७-६-१३) इन्हें चतुर्भुज कहा गया है (७-८-२५-२६)। शंख, चक्र, गदा धारण किये हुये रहते हैं। इनके वक्ष-

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स्थल पर श्रीवत्स का चिह्न है, लक्ष्मी कभी साथ नहीं छोड़ती हैं (६-११-१४)। इन्हें धनुष लिये दर्शाया गया है १-७५-२१-३४)। भगवान केशव (१-४५-३०) त्रिलोकीनाथ श्रीहरि (१-७६) भगवान विष्णु को कमल नयन कहा गया है (२-४-४१)। राम सीता के साथ वैसी ही तुलना की गयी है जैसा की लक्ष्मी के साथ विष्णु शोभा देते हैं। हाथ में कमल लिये रहने वाली लक्ष्मी को दर्शाया गया है (५ ५-३)। विष्णु को शंख चक्र, गदा शार्ङ्ग धनुष, खण्ङ्ग, धारण किये हुये सुन्दर पंखवाले गरुड़ पर आरूढ़ पीताम्बरधारी कहा गया है (६-६३-६६)। प्रारम्भिक भारतीय मूर्तिकला में, कुषाण तथा गुप्तकालीन शिल्प में विष्णु इसी रूप में उरेहे गये हैं। गुप्तकालीन देवगढ़ के गजेन्द्र मोक्ष में उड़ते हुये गरुण पर सवार तथा हमेशा साथ रहने वाली लक्ष्मी के साथ शेषशायी रूप में बड़ा ही सजीव चित्रण है। विष्णु के त्रिविक्रम की चर्चा है (५-२१-५८)। शिव महादेव शंकर को अनेक रूपों में दर्शाया गया है (१-६६-११)। इन्हें पशुपति शिव (५-१३-५०) त्रिनेत्रधारी (१-४३-६-७ तथा ७-६-२३) त्रिशूलधारी (१-४५-२३) त्रिशूलधारी, जटाजूट मस्तक पर गंगा को धारण करने वाले (१-४३-६,१६,२०) विषधर, कण्ठ में धारण करने वाले कहे गये हैं। कला में शिव के जटा, जूट तथा दक्षिण भारत से गंगावतरण की मूर्तियाँ प्रमाणित करती हैं कि शिल्पाङ्कन में भारतीय मूर्तिकार ने रामायण का भरपूर उपयोग किया है। रामायण से प्रभावित होकर शिव के स्वरूपों को अपने कला में स्थान दिया तथा उन्हें उसी रूप में उरेहा जैसा रामायण में शिव स्वरूप चित्रित है। इसी तरह शिव के धनुष जिससे त्रिपुरासुर का नाश हुआ था, का उल्लेख किया गया (१-७५-१२)। गुप्तकालीन विहार के चन्डीमाओ से प्राप्त स्तम्भ पर इस दृश्य का बहुत ही सुन्दर शिल्पांकन हुआ है। पार्वती के साथ बैल पर चढ़ कर शिव का वायु मार्ग से चलने का उल्लेख द्रष्टव्य है। (७-४-२७) इसी तरह वृषभध्वज की चर्चा है। (२-५५-१३) शिव का पार्वती के साथ वाहन बैल पर आरूढ़ रूप गुप्तकालीन देवगढ़ के मन्दिर फलक पर देखते ही बनता है। शिल्पी को इस चित्रण में पूर्ण फसलता प्राप्त है। वाहन नन्दी शिव पार्वती को लिये इस रूप में उरेहा गया है मानो वह वायु में उड़ रहा हो, उससे उद्भूत गति एवं ओज है। सम्पूर्ण चित्रण भारतीय मूर्तिकला का अनूठा दृश्य उपस्थित करता है। शिवपुत्र स्कन्द छः मुख वाले देव सेनापति के रूप में चित्रित किये गये हैं (१-३७-२८-२६)।

इन्द्र गजराज ऐरावत की पीठ पर विराजमान रहते हैं (५-३७-२५)। अनेक स्थानों पर इन्द्र बज्र सहित दर्शाये गये हैं (१,४६-२२-२३, २-२५-३४, ५-१३-६५)। इन्द्र के साथ शची अर्थात् इन्द्राणी का भी उल्लेख पाया जाता है (६-११३-५१)। देवताओं सहित ग्रहों की प्रार्थना की गयी है (२-५५-१३)। (२-२५-१३-१४)। गुप्तकालीन तथा मध्यकालीन हिन्दू मन्दिरों में शिला पट्टों में नवग्रह स्थापित किये गये प्रदर्शित हैं। पाशधारी वरुण (५-१३-२७) द्रष्टव्य है। सहस्रनेत्रधारी इन्द्र हैं (२-१-५१)। वज्रधारी वर्षा के देव हैं (२-१२-१०४)॥

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धन्वन्तरि को भुजाओं में दण्ड तथा कमण्डल धारण करने वाला कहा गया है (१-४२-३१-३३)। परशुराम कन्धे पर फरसा तथा हाथ में धनुष एवं भयंकर बाण लिये दिखाये गये हैं (१-७४-१७-१६)। गन्धर्व, अप्सरा, विद्याधरगणों की अनेक बार चर्चा की गयी है। गले में हार, पैरों में नूपुर, भुजाओं में बाजूबंद, कलाइयों में कंगन धारण किये आकाश में अपने पतियों जो कण्ठ में माला धारण किये, लाल रंग के फूल और चन्दन लगाये हुये थे, मन्द-मन्द मुस्कराती चकित सी खड़ी हो गयी थी (५-१-२३-२७)। इस रूप में गन्धर्व विद्याधरों की अनेक प्रतिमायें ग्वालियर, विदिशा, नचना आदि से प्राप्त है जो राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय तथा देश के अन्य कई संग्रहालयों की शोभा बढ़ा रही हैं। दिशाओं के देव अष्टदिकपाल यथा स्थान दिखाये गये हैं। पूर्व दिशा में वज्रधारी इन्द्र, दक्षिण दिशा में यमराज, पश्चिम दिशा में वरुणा तथा उत्तर दिशा में कुबेर को दर्शाया गया है (२-१६-२४)। शिल्प में व्रजधारी इन्द्र, यम, कुबेर आदि की प्रतिमा द्दष्टव्य है। इन्हें यहाँ दिशाओं के देव के रूप में ही मन्दिर के आला में स्थान दिया गया है। भूमरा में इनके कई अच्छे प्रतिमा प्राप्त है। मध्यकालीन हिन्दू मन्दिरों, उड़ीसा, मध्य प्रदेश, राजस्थान आदि स्थानों में शिल्प में इसी रूप में उरेहे गये हैं जो आज भी द्रष्टव्य है। रामायण में प्रथम बार अष्टदिकपालों का दिशा निर्धारण हुआ है। इसी को आधार मानकर भारतीय शिल्पी ने दिकपालों को अपनी कला में स्थान दिया है। इस तरह कामदेव बाण के साथ दर्शाये गये हैं (५·३६·५१)। कला में भी इनका इसी रूप में चित्रण है।

रामायण में देव प्रतिमाओं का कई बार उल्लेख किया गया है। राम के राजप्रासाद का शिखर मोती, मूगों के तोरण तथा स्वर्ण प्रतिमाओं से सुसज्जित था (२·१५·३३)। अयोध्या से चित्रकूट के रास्ते में भरत की सेना के विश्राम स्थलों पर नीलमणि की प्रतिमाएँ उत्कीर्ण थीं (२·२०·१२)। रामायण में राम तथा रावण दोनों शिवलिंग की पूजा करते हुये दर्शाये गये हैं। लक्ष्मी की कमलासीन देवी रूप में कल्पना की जाने लगी थी (५ ५ ३)। यही नहीं सुन्दरकाण्ड में गंजलक्ष्मी का पूर्ण विकसित रूप मिलता है। कमलासन पर बैठी गजलक्ष्मी की एक सुन्दर मूर्तिका उल्लेख है जिनके हाथ में कमल और दोनों ओर सूड़ों में केसर युक्त कमल लिये हाथी अंकित थे। रावण के पुष्पक विमान में कमल मण्डित सरोवर में ऐसे हाथी बनाये गये थे जो लक्ष्मी के अभिषेक कार्य में नियुक्त थे। उनकी सूँड़ बड़ी सुन्दर थी। उनके अङ्गों में कमल के केसर लगे हुए थे तथा उन्होंने अपने सूँड़ों में कमल पुष्प धारण किये थे। उनके साथ ही वह तेजस्विनी लक्ष्मी देवी की प्रतिमा भी विराजमान थी जिनका उन हाथियों के द्वारा अभिषेक हो रहा था। उनके हाथ बड़े सुन्दर थे। उन्होंने अपने हाथ में कमल पुष्प धारण कर रक्खा था (५·७ १४)। भारतीय शिल्पियों ने लक्ष्मी को इसी रूप में भरहुत, साँची, बोधगया, सारनाथ आदि स्थानों में कला में उरेहा है। रामायण में हो सर्वप्रथम गजलक्ष्मी का प्रतिमा विधानीय लक्षण को निर्धारित किया गया है। भारतीय कला में गजलक्ष्मी का रामायण में वर्णित रूप द्रष्टव्य है।

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उत्तर काण्ड में उल्लेख है कि राम यज्ञ में धर्मपत्नी सीता की सोने की प्रतिमा निर्मित करवा लिया करते थे (७·९९ ७)। कई स्थानों पर सीता की तुलना मय निर्मित किसी अद्भुत सुवर्ण मूर्ति से की गई है। ये सभी प्रमाण देवप्रतिमाओं तथा उनके प्रतिमा विधान, लक्षणों की पुष्टि के उदाहरण हैं।

लंका में भी मूर्तिकला का स्पष्ट प्रमाण मिलता है। रावण के शयनागार हाँथी दाँत, सोने, चाँदी मणियुक्त प्रवाल आदि मूर्तियों से सुसज्जित किया गया था (५·९ २३)। ये सभी तथ्य कला, सौन्दर्य की लोकप्रियता दर्शाते हैं। रावण के पुष्पक विमान के खम्भों पर सुन्दर नारियों की मूर्तियाँ देदीप्यमान थीं। श्रेष्ठ हंसों द्वारा आकाश में ढोये जाते, विमान भाँति जान पड़ता था। निश्चय ही यह आधार भारतीय कला में शालभंजिकाओं के निर्माण में सहायक हुआ। शुंग, कुषाण कला में इसके सुन्दर रूप देखते ही बनते हैं।

नारीप्रवेकैरिव दीप्यमानम्।
हंसप्रवेकैरिव बाह्यमानम्॥ ५ ७ ७

लंका के रथों में नाना प्रकार के मुखों वाले गधों, मृगों, सिंहों के मुखों से सुसज्जित होने की बातें कही गयी हैं। (मृग सिंह मुखैर्युक्तं खरैः कनकभूषितैः ६·५१·२८) ये इहामृग कहे गये हैं। खम्भों पर अद्भुत पशु, पक्षी, मूंगे के पक्षी, रत्नों के सर्प, भेड़ (५ ९ १३) आदि बने थे। इस तरह के इहामृग भरहुत, साँची बोधगया आदि के तोरणों पर अधिकाधिक संख्या में निर्मित किये गये हैं। ये काल्पनिक पशु, पक्षी कला के सौन्दर्य को बढ़ाने में समर्थ हैं।

रावण के पुष्पक विमान को आकाश में ढोने वाले निशाचरों को बड़े पेट वाले कुण्डलधारी कहा गया है (५ ८·७)। ठीक ऐसे ही निशाचर बड़े पेटवाले, कुण्डल धारी बौने कद के साँची स्तूप के कैपिटल के भार को ढोते हुये दिखाये गये हैं। शुंगकालीन प्रथम शताब्दी ई० पू० के, भारतीय शिल्पियों ने रामायण में वर्णित स्वरूपों को मूर्तियों में उरेह कर अपनी कला-कौशल की सूझ-बूझ का सफल परिचय दिया है। पाषाण, धातु, काष्ठ आदि की निर्मित मूर्तियों का विवरण, रामायण में पर्याप्त रूप में मिलता है। इससे प्रभावित होकर शुंग, कुषाण, गुप्त तथा मध्यकालीन भारतीय शिल्पियों ने अपनी कला में सर्वोत्कृष्ट प्रमाण प्रस्तुत किये हैं जो आज भी अनेक स्थानों पर द्रष्टव्य है।

संक्षेप में कहना यह है कि रामायण चित्रकला, स्थापत्यकला, मूर्तिकला, प्रतिमा विज्ञान आदि अर्थात् शिल्प के विविध आयामों की सामग्री से परिपूर्ण है। शिल्पियों के लिये भी यह वैसा ही आधार ग्रन्थ था जैसा कि रामकथा बाद के कवियों के लिये। दोनों ने इसका भरपूर उपयोग अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में किया है।

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ABDUCTIONS OF SĪTĀ (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BHARAT KALA BHAVAN PAINTINGS)

T. K. Biswas

Bharat Kala Bhavan possesses a huge collection of paintings on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These paintings cover the major artistic trends namely, Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari South Indian and even the so called Bengal School. There are uncounted varsions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Every language in India has its own *Rāmāyaṇa*. Like every language nearly every region in India attempted to express the lyrical and scintillatting events of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its own characteristic manner through the various mediums of art.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* was compiled quite early. But for reasons unknown, in early Indian art, the lesser epic did not receive the desired amount of attention. To be precise, the proper recognition to the *Rāmāyana* was vouchsafed at *Kailāśanātha* temple at Ellora, The phenomenal popularity, thereafter, of this epic was noticed among the mediaeval painters in India. These painters, belonging to the different geographical zones, were reared up in various surroundings and were trained under uncommon teachers. The works of illustration with particular reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* continued for centuries. Therefore, though working on a common theme, due to the obvious impact of *sthāna*, *kāla* and *pātra*, these painters came out with such composition which were never been identical. Each illustrated manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa* maintained its own distinctiveness and approach. An analysis is attempted in the following lines to study a few illustrations on the *Abductions of Sita* and that too with the available paintings in Bharat Kala Bhavan.

Before *Rāvaṇa* abducted Sītā, she was earlier once abducted by a *rākshasa* called *Virādha*. This episode finds descrip-

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tion in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa (Āraṇya Kāṇḍa*, 4th *Sarga* and verses 5-33). After meeting sage *Atri*, when Rāma, *Lakshmaṇa* and *Sītā* entered deep into the *Daṇḍaka* forest, they confronted a terrible giant, *Virādha*. The demon was terrific in look, had a wide mouth and fierce belly. He held a long spear in which dead bodies of three lions, four tigers, two wolves, ten spotted deers and the head of a huge elephant were seen affixed, presumably these would be shortly eaten up by this carnivorous demon.

Virādha forcibly took *Sītā* away and declared that this woman would be his wife. Rāma, for a short while, plunged into deep despair seeing his wife in the arms of the demon. Enraged Rāma, to retrieve his wife, decided to punish the *rākshasa*. He raised his bow and had shot seven arrows in quick succession and these wounded the demon badly. Reasonably injured *Virādha* leaving *Sītā* on the ground, vigorously attacked the epic heroes with his spear. *Rāma* threw another arrow that did cut off the shaft of the spear in two pieces. Thereafter, a grim battle followed. Unable to subdue the demon in war, the epic heroes buried him alive. When the burial pit was being dug for the mortally wounded demon, the latter exposed his real identity. He said that in his previous birth he was a *gandharva* and his name was *Tumburu*. For his lascivious attempts on *apsarā Rambhā*, he was cursed by *Kubera* to be born as a *rākshasa* in this life. The demon was further informed that he would be redeemed as and when *Rāma* of *Ikshvāku* family would kill him in the battle.

Bharat Kala Bhavan has in its collection four paintings that hail from three centres of art viz., from Malwa, Kulu (Shangri) and Kangra. The manuscript from Malwa is not complete. It has sixty illustrated pages. Painted in the first half of the 17th century (1640 A.D.), this incomplete set includes a page where the killing of *Virādha* is depicted by the epic heroes. The identification of this page became very handy since its identity is inscribed at its back. The painting depicts

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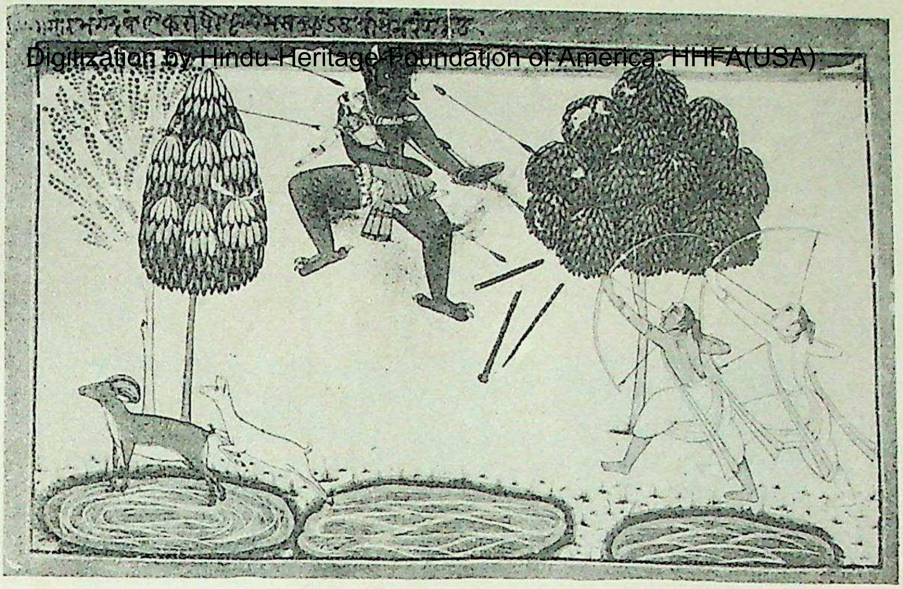

Fig. 1. 'A fierce battle in Progress', Malwa Painting, 17th Century A. D.

Fig. 3. "A pair of galloping Dondey", Mughal style Painting, Acc. No. 5423, Bharat Kala Bhavan.

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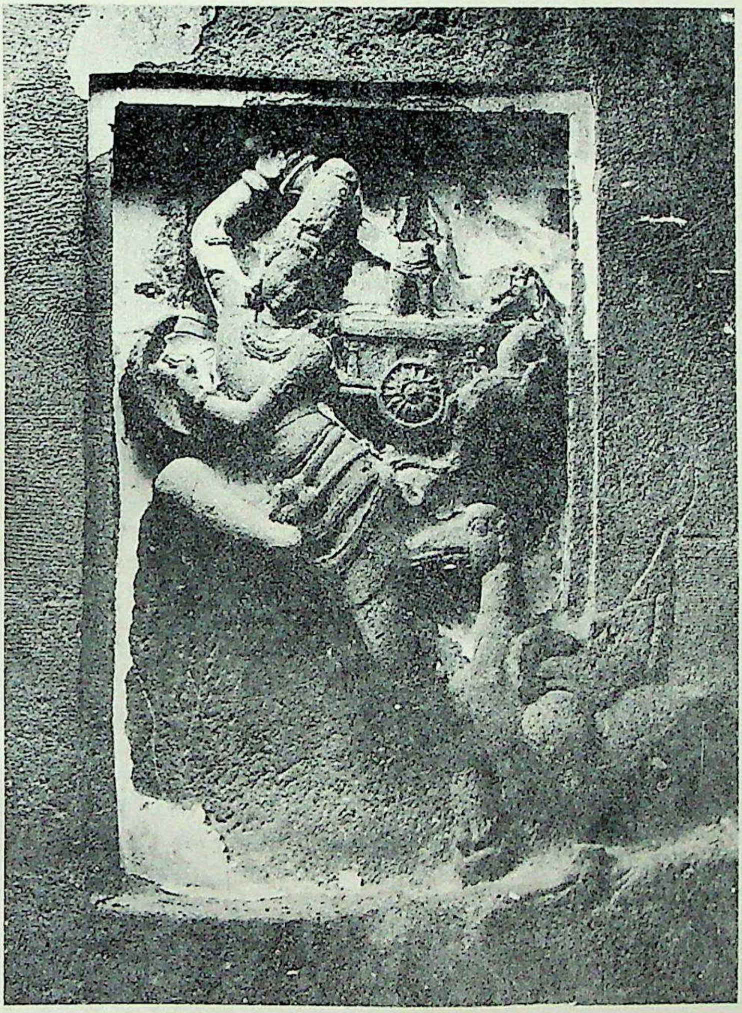

Fig. 2. "Attempt on stone to depict this event". Kailashnath temple, Ellora, 8th Century, A. D.

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अनेक प्रकार की वेष-भूषाओं से विभूषित थीं (५-९-३३)। स्पष्ट है विविध रंगो से सजाये हुये वस्त्र स्त्रियाँ धारण करती थीं। पुष्पक विमान भी सुवर्ण के समान लाल रंग के सुगन्धयुक्त चन्दन से संयुक्त होने के कारण वह बालसूर्य के समान जान पड़ता था (५-९-१८)। रावण के सोने का पलंग स्फटिक मणिकी, रत्नों से जड़ा, पाटी-पाये सुवर्ण जटित होने के कारण चितकबरे, पलंग पर बहुमूल्य बिछौने बिछाये गये थे। वह अग्नि के समान देदीप्यमान, अशोक पुष्पों की मालाओं से अलंकृत था। भेड़ की खाल मढ़ी हुई सब ओर से उत्तम फूलों की मालाओं से सुशोभित था (५-१०-१-६)।

रावण के पुष्पक विमान में तरह-तरह के चित्र बने हुये थे। यह रत्नों से विभूषित देदीप्यमान था। भाँति-भाँति के वृक्षों के फूलों से आच्छादित पुष्प पराग से भरे हुये पर्वत, शिखर के समान सुशोभित था। हंसों द्वारा आकाश में ढोये जाते हुए विमान की भाँति जान पड़ता था। शिखर पर्वत, ग्रहों चन्द्रमा के कारण तथा अनेक वर्णों से युक्त होने के कारण मेघ विचित्र शोभा पा रहा था। सोने और मणियों से निर्मित कृत्रिम पर्वत-मालाओं से पूर्ण, पर्वत वृक्षों की विस्तृत पक्तियों से हरे-भरे रचे गये थे। वे पुष्प भी केसर एवं पंखुड़ियों से पूर्ण निर्मित हुये थे। केसर युक्त कमल विचित्र वन और अद्‌भुत सरोवरों का भी निर्माण किया गया था। वह हेम पद्मों से सुसज्जित, चाँदी और मूगों के पक्षी रत्नों से सर्पों की रचना तथा उसमें सुन्दर घोड़े निर्मित थे (५-७-६-१३)। उसके फर्स भी चित्रों से सजाये जाते थे। निश्चय ही ये सारे प्रसंग, विषय, बाद के चित्रकारों के लिये आधार सामग्री बनी। मध्यकालीन भारतीय चित्रकला में रामायण का भरपूर प्रभाव है। पशु, पक्षी, पुष्प लताएँ, वृक्ष, वन आदि के दृश्य रामायण में चित्रांकित हैं, जिसका आधार भारतीय चित्रकारों ने लिया है। अजन्ता की चित्रकला में ऐसे कई दृश्य हैं।

रामायण में लकड़ी की बनी वस्तुओं पर भी चित्रों का उल्लेख मिलता है। वाली का शव सुन्दर चित्रों से सजाई हुई पालकी में श्मशान भूमि ले जाया गया था (४-२४)। इसी तरह रावण का शव भी सुन्दर पुष्पचित्रित रथ में ले जाया गया (६-१११-१०९)।

लंका में हनुमान ने सीता को लतामण्डपों, चित्रशालाओं, आपानशाला, पुष्पगृह, क्रीड़ागृह, गृहाद्यान की गलियों और पुष्पक विमान आदि में खोजा था (५-१२-१,१३,१४)। लंका के तोरण वेल-बूटों से सुशोभित था। लतापक्ति विराजिते (५-२-१८)। सुवर्ण भूषित रथों पर भी तरह-तरह के दृश्य बनाये जाते थे। मृगों सिहों के मुख से सुसज्जित पिशाचवदन से चित्रित थे। रंग-विरंगे कालीन भी बनाये जाते थे। पलंग अलंकृत किये जाते थे। रत्नों से जड़े वस्तुओं आदि की विस्तृत चर्चा की गई है। हनुमान ने एक ही पीले रंग के पुराने रेशमी वस्त्र से ढकी हुई सीता को देखा था (५-१५-२१)। वर्तन भी तरह-तरह के चित्र-विचित्र, अति

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मूल्यवान प्रयोग में लाये जाते थे। दृष्टव्य है चित्रकला के सन्दर्भ में रामायण एक पूर्ण विकसित उच्चकोटि की सांस्कृतिक, वैभव से परिपूर्ण है।

मूर्तिकला अथवा देव प्रतिमाओं के चर्चा के पहले रामायण में वर्णित देव-स्थान एवं देवपूजा पर ध्यान देना आवश्यक प्रतीत होता है। रामायण में अनेक स्थानों पर देव-मन्दिरों का उल्लेख हुआ है। देवतागार, देवपथ, देवस्थान, देवगृह देवायतन, देवतायान आदि नामों की चर्चा की गयी है। महाराज दशरथ की नववधुओं के मिथिला से अयोध्या आने पर अन्तपुर की रानियों ने देवमन्दिरों में उनकी पूजा करवायी थी (१-७७-१३)। स्पष्ट है देव पूजन के निमित्त अन्तःपुर में मन्दिर निर्मित थे। राम के राज्याभिषेक का सुखद समाचार पाकर अयोध्यावासी हिमालय के शिखर के समान ऊँचे देव-मन्दिरों पर ध्वजाएँ तथा पताकाएँ फहराने लगे थे (२-६-११–३)। स्वयं रामने यौवराज्याभिषेक के पहले दिन सीता के साथ संयम पूर्वक विष्णु मंदिर में शयन किया था (२-६-४)। वनगमन के समय राम द्वारा माता कौशल्या से आज्ञा मागने पर कौशल्या राम से कहती हैं वे सब देबता महर्षियों के साथ वन में तुम्हारी रक्षा करें (२-२५-४)। भगवान स्कन्ददेव, सोम, वृहस्पति सप्तर्षिगण और नारद सभी तुम्हारी रक्षा करें। साथ ही साथ इन्द्र, नदी, वेदियों, मन्दिरों, पर्वत, वृक्ष, जलाशय, पक्षी, सर्प सिंह, सिद्धगण, दिशाएँ, दिकपाल, समुद्र, वरुण द्युलोक, अन्तरिक्ष, पृथ्वी, वायु, चराचर प्राणी, नक्षत्र, देवताओं सहित ग्रह, शुक्र, सूर्य, कुबेर, यम, अग्नि, शिव, भूतगण, सभी देवता एवं दैत्य आदि से प्रार्थना करती हैं तथा राम की वन यात्रा मङ्गलकारी हो, अग्नि में हवन कर पूजा करती है (२-२५-१-४६)। अपने वनगमन में चित्रकूट में भी राम अयोध्या के मन्दिरों को याद करते रहते हैं। पर्णकुटी निर्मित कर पर्णशाला के अधिष्ठाता देव की पूजा कर पर्णकुटी में प्रवेश करते हैं (२-५-२१-३०)। ऋषि मुनियों के आश्रम में भी मन्दिर बने हुये थे। अगस्त्य मुनि के आश्रम में विभिन्न देवताओं के लिये पृथक स्थान बने हुये थे (२-१२-१६-२०)। रास्ते के मन्दिरों की प्रदक्षिणा की जाती थी। लंका में भी चैत्य प्रासाद थे। हजार खम्भोंवाला, गोलाकार, कैलास के समान श्वेतवर्ण और बहुत ऊँचा देदीप्यमान अशोकवाटिका में हनुमान को चैत्य प्रासाद दिखाई पड़ा था (५-१५-१४-१७)। सुन्दर काण्ड (५-२४-४५-४७) में इसी तरह राक्षसी द्वारा सुरा के साथ मनुष्य के मांस का आस्वादन करके 'निकुम्भिला' देवी के सामने नृत्य की बातें कही गयी हैं। ये सभी तथ्य मन्दिरों के साथ ही साथ मूर्तियों के अस्तित्व को दर्शाते हैं।

रामायण में कई स्थानों पर वेदों की चर्चा की गयी है। वेदवेत्ता ब्राह्मणों से दशरथ प्रसन्न रहते थे (१-७७-२३-२४)। श्री राम तथा कुश लव वेदों के पारंगत थे (२-१-२०-१-४-५-६)। रावण का दाह-संस्कार वैदिक विधि से हुआ था (६-३-११७)। वैदिक देवों की बार-बार प्रार्थनायें की गयी हैं। माता कौसल्या राम के वनगमन के मंगलमय तथा रक्षा के लिये अन्तरिक्ष, द्युलोक, पृथिवी के सभी देवों

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की प्रार्थना करती है (२-२५-१३-१४)। इन्द्र, वरुणा अग्नि को बार-बार पूजा की गयी है। देव पूजन के लिये गंध, पुष्प, नैवेद्य, धूप दीप आदि पूजन सामग्री का उल्लेख है। कौसल्या और राम ने अनेक बार देव पूजा की। मनुष्य जो स्वयं अन्न खाता है, देवता भी ग्रहण करते हैं, कहा गया है (२-१०३-३०)। वन में विचरने वाले मुनि सहित समस्त देवता, दैत्य, जन्तुओं, पशुओं तथा शिव आदि देवताओं की प्रार्थनायें हैं। इसके साथ ही साथ विधि पूर्वक यज्ञ कर अग्नि होम करके हवन से बचे हुये हविष्य के द्वारा होम की वेदी से बाहर दशो दिशाओं में इन्द्र आदि लोकपालों के लिये बलि अर्पित है (२-२५)। वेदों के पारङ्गत ब्राह्मण धार्मिक अनुष्ठान, अभिषेक आदि किया करते थे (२-२६-१३)। विष्णु के साथ-साथ शिव की पूजा की जाती थी (२-२५-४३)। राम और रावण दोनों ही शिव की पूजा में बड़ी श्रद्धा रखते हैं। राम लंका से लौटते हुये सीता को सेतुबाँध दिखाते हैं जहाँ भगवान शिव ने उन पर कृपा की थी (६-१२३-२०)। ब्रह्मा, विष्णु, शिव, स्कन्द, प्रजापति, इन्द्र, कुबेर, काल, यम, चन्द्रमा वरुणा, पितर, वसु, सान्ध, अश्विनीकुमार, मरुद्गण, मनु, वायु, अग्नि, प्रजा, प्राण ऋतुओं को प्रकट करने वाले तथा प्रभा के पुञ्ज कहे गये हैं (६-१०५-८९)। सूर्यदेव दिन के आधिपति, ज्योतिगणों के स्वामी की बार-बार प्रार्थनायें की गयी हैं। रावण के साथ युद्ध में थके, चिन्तित रणभूमि में खड़े राम को अगस्त्यमुनि ने सूर्य की ही आराधना कर "आदित्यहृदय" स्तोत्र का जप करने को कहा था। क्योंकि इस जप से सदा विजय हाथ लगती है (६-१०५-१-३०)। राम ने इसे तीन बार जप किया और युद्ध में आ डटे। रामायण में वैदिक देवताओं के साथ ही साथ अन्य गौड़ देवताओं अष्टदिकपाल, विश्वकर्मा, नक्षत्र, कामदेव आदि की भी यथास्थान चर्चा की गयी है।

रामायण में मन्दिरों के अस्तित्व के साथ ही साथ देवों की पूजा तथा देव-प्रतिमाओं के निमित्त प्रर्याप्त सामग्री मिलती है। इन देव प्रतिमाओं को मन्दिर में स्थापित कर पूजा की जाती थी। मन्दिर अन्तःपुर, सड़क के किनारे, चौराहों आदि पर निर्मित किये जाते थे (२-३-१८)। राम का भवन देव प्रतिमाओं से अलंकृत था (२-१५-३२,३३ ३५,३६)। भरत ननिहाल से लौटकर देखते हैं, अयोध्या उदास है देवालय तथा चैत्य हीन दशा में दिखाई दे रहे थे (२-४२-४३)। देव प्रतिमाओं की पूजा बन्द हो गयी थी (२-७१-४०)। कारण स्पष्ट था राम का २७ वर्ष की उम्र में सीता, लक्ष्मण सहित वनवास हो गया था (२-२०-४५)। महाराज दशरथ स्वर्ग सिधार गये थे तथा सारी अयोध्या शोक में डूब गयी थी।

वाल्मीकि रामायण में देव प्रतिमाओं की ही चर्चा नहीं की गई है अपितु देवताओं का मानवीकरण कर उनके लाक्षणिक स्वरूपों का पूर्ण चित्रण प्राप्त है। ब्रह्म लोकस्रष्टा हैं (२-१६-२२)। ब्रह्मा को चतुर्मुख कहा गया है (१-२-२३ तथा ७-५-१२)। शिल्प में ब्रह्मा चतुर्मख ही पाये जाते हैं। विष्णु, शंख, चक्र एवं गदा के साथ अनेक स्थानों पर दर्शाये गये हैं (२-२-२३ तथा ७-६-१३) इन्हें चतुर्भुज कहा गया है (७-८-२५-२६)। शंख, चक्र, गदा धारण किये हुये रहते हैं। इनके वक्ष-

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स्थल पर श्रीवत्स का चिह्न है, लक्ष्मी कभी साथ नहीं छोड़ती हैं (६-११-१४)। इन्हें धनुष लिये दर्शाया गया है (१-७५-२१-३४)। भगवान केशव (१-४५-३०) त्रिलोकीनाथ श्रीहरि (१-७६) भगवान विष्णु को कमल नयन कहा गया है (२-४-४१)। राम सीता के साथ वैसी ही तुलना की गयी है जैसा की लक्ष्मी के साथ विष्णु शोभा देते हैं। हाथ में कमल लिये रहने वाली लक्ष्मी को दर्शाया गया है (५ ५-३)। विष्णु को शंख चक्र, गदा शार्ङ्ग धनुष, खण्ङ्ग, धारण किये हुये सुन्दर पंखवाले गरुड़ पर आरूढ़ पीताम्बरधारी कहा गया है (६-६३-६६)। प्रारम्भिक भारतीय मूर्तिकला में, कुषाण तथा गुप्तकालीन शिल्प में विष्णु इसी रूप में उरेहे गये हैं। गुप्तकालीन देवगढ़ के गजेन्द्र मोक्ष में उड़ते हुये गरुण पर सवार तथा हमेशा साथ रहने वाली लक्ष्मी के साथ शेषशायी रूप में बड़ा ही सजीव चित्रण है। विष्णु के त्रिविक्रम की चर्चा है (५-२१-५८)। शिव महादेव शंकर को अनेक रूपों में दर्शाया गया है (१-६६-११)। इन्हें पशुपति शिव (५-१३-५०) त्रिनेत्रधारी (१-४३-६-७ तथा ७-६-२३) त्रिशूलधारी (१-४५-२३) त्रिशूलधारी, जटाजूट मस्तक पर गंगा को धारण करने वाले (१-४३-६,१६,२०) विषधर, कण्ठ में धारण करने वाले कहे गये हैं। कला में शिव के जटा, जूट तथा दक्षिण भारत से गंगावतरण की मूर्तियाँ प्रमाणित करती हैं कि शिल्पाङ्कन में भारतीय मूर्तिकार ने रामायण का भरपूर उपयोग किया है। रामायण से प्रभावित होकर शिव के स्वरूपों को अपने कला में स्थान दिया तथा उन्हें उसी रूप में उरेहा जैसा रामायण में शिव स्वरूप चित्रित है। इसी तरह शिव के धनुष जिससे त्रिपुरासुर का नाश हुआ था, का उल्लेख किया गया (१-७५-१२)। गुप्तकालीन विहार के चन्डीमाओ से प्राप्त स्तम्भ पर इस दृश्य का बहुत ही सुन्दर शिल्पांकन हुआ है। पार्वती के साथ बैल पर चढ़ कर शिव का वायु मार्ग से चलने का उल्लेख द्रष्टव्य है। (७-४-२७) इसी तरह वृषभध्वज की चर्चा है। (२-५५-१३) शिव का पार्वती के साथ वाहन बैल पर आरूढ़ रूप गुप्तकालीन देवगढ़ के मन्दिर फलक पर देखते ही बनता है। शिल्पी को इस चित्रण में पूर्ण फसलता प्राप्त है। वाहन नन्दी शिव पार्वती को लिये इस रूप में उरेहा गया है मानो वह वायु में उड़ रहा हो, उससे उद्भूत गति एवं ओज है। सम्पूर्ण चित्रण भारतीय मूर्तिकला का अनूठा दृश्य उपस्थित करता है। शिवपुत्र स्कन्द छः मुख वाले देव सेनापति के रूप में चित्रित किये गये हैं (१-३७-२८-२९)।

इन्द्र गजराज ऐरावत की पीठ पर विराजमान रहते हैं (५-३७-२५)। अनेक स्थानों पर इन्द्र बज्र सहित दर्शाये गये हैं (१,४६-२२-२३, २-२५-३४, ५-१३-६५)। इन्द्र के साथ शची अर्थात् इन्द्राणी का भी उल्लेख पाया जाता है (६-११३-५१)। देवताओं सहित ग्रहों की प्रार्थना की गयी है (२-५५-१३)। (२-२५-१३-१४)। गुप्तकालीन तथा मध्यकालीन हिन्दू मन्दिरों में शिला पट्टों में नवग्रह स्थापित किये गये प्रदर्शित हैं। पाशधारी वरुण (५-१३-२७) द्रष्टव्य है। सहस्रनेत्रधारी इन्द्र हैं (२-१-५१)। वज्रधारी वर्षा के देव हैं (२-१२-१०४)॥

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धन्वन्तरि को भुजाओं में दण्ड तथा कमण्डल धारण करने वाला कहा गया है (१-४२-३१-३३)। परशुराम कन्धे पर फरसा तथा हाथ में धनुष एवं भयंकर बाण लिये दिखाये गये हैं (१-७४-१७-१९)। गन्धर्व, अप्सरा, विद्याधरगणों की अनेक बार चर्चा की गयी है। गले में हार, पैरों में नूपुर, भुजाओं में बाजूबंद, कलाइयों में कंगन धारण किये आकाश में अपने पतियों जो कण्ठ में माला धारण किये, लाल रंग के फूल और चन्दन लगाये हुये थे, मन्द-मन्द मुस्कराती चकित सी खड़ी हो गयी थी (५-१-२३-२७)। इस रूप में गन्धर्व विद्याधरों की अनेक प्रतिमायें ग्वालियर, विदिशा, नचना आदि से प्राप्त है जो राष्ट्रीय संग्रहालय तथा देश के अन्य कई संग्रहालयों की शोभा बढ़ा रही हैं। दिशाओं के देव अष्टदिकपाल यथा स्थान दिखाये गये हैं। पूर्व दिशा में वज्रधारी इन्द्र, दक्षिण दिशा में यमराज, पश्चिम दिशा में वरुणा तथा उत्तर दिशा में कुबेर को दर्शाया गया है (२-१६-२४)। शिल्प में व्रजधारी इन्द्र, यम, कुबेर आदि की प्रतिमा दृष्टव्य है। इन्हें यहाँ दिशाओं के देव के रूप में ही मन्दिर के आला में स्थान दिया गया है। भूमरा में इनके कई अच्छे प्रतिमा प्राप्त है। मध्यकालोन हिन्दू मन्दिरों, उड़ीसा, मध्य प्रदेश, राजस्थान आदि स्थानों में शिल्प में इसी रूप में उरेहे गये हैं जो आज भी द्रष्टव्य है। रामायण में प्रथम बार अष्टदिकपालों का दिशा निर्धारण हुआ है। इसी को आधार मानकर भारतीय शिल्पी ने दिकपालों को अपनी कला में स्थान दिया है। इस तरह कामदेव बाण के साथ दर्शाये गये हैं (५·३९·५१)। कला में भी इनका इसी रूप में चित्रण है।

रामायण में देव प्रतिमाओं का कई बार उल्लेख किया गया है। राम के राजप्रासाद का शिखर मोती, मूगों के तोरण तथा स्वर्ण प्रतिमाओं से सुसज्जित था (२·१५·३३)। अयोध्या से चित्रकूट के रास्ते में भरत की सेना के विश्राम स्थलों पर नीलमणि की प्रतिमाएँ उत्कीर्ण थीं (२·२०·१२)। रामायण में राम तथा रावण दोनों शिवलिंग की पूजा करते हुये दर्शाये गये हैं। लक्ष्मी की कमलासीन देवी रूप में कल्पना की जाने लगी थी (५ ५ ३)। यही नहीं सुन्दरकाण्ड में गंजलक्ष्मी का पूर्ण विकसित रूप मिलता है। कमलासन पर बैठी गजलक्ष्मी की एक सुन्दर मूर्तिका उल्लेख है जिनके हाथ में कमल और दोनों ओर सूड़ों में केसर युक्त कमल लिये हाथी अंकित थे। रावण के पुष्पक विमान में कमल मण्डित सरोवर में ऐसे हाथी बनाये गये थे जो लक्ष्मी के अभिषेक कार्य में नियुक्त थे। उनकी सूँड़ बड़ी सुन्दर थी। उनके अङ्गों में कमल के केसर लगे हुए थे तथा उन्होंने अपने सूँड़ों में कमल पुष्प धारण किये थे। उनके साथ ही वह तेजस्विनी लक्ष्मी देवी की प्रतिमा भी विराजमान थी जिनका उन हाथियों के द्वारा अभिषेक हो रहा था। उनके हाथ बड़े सुन्दर थे। उन्होंने अपने हाथ में कमल पुष्प धारण कर रक्खा था (५ ७ १४)। भारतीय शिल्पियों ने लक्ष्मी को इसी रूप में भरहुत, साँची, बोधगया, सारनाथ आदि स्थानों में कला में उरेहा है। रामायण में ही सर्वप्रथम गजलक्ष्मी का प्रतिमा विधानीय लक्षण को निर्धारित किया गया है। भारतीय कला में गजलक्ष्मी का रामायण में वर्णित रूप द्रष्टव्य है।

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उत्तर काण्ड में उल्लेख है कि राम यज्ञ में धर्मपत्नी सीता की सोने की प्रतिमा निर्मित करवा लिया करते थे (७·९९ ७)। कई स्थानों पर सीता की तुलना मय निर्मित किसी अद्भुत सुवर्ण मूर्ति से की गई है। ये सभी प्रमाण देवप्रतिमाओं तथा उनके प्रतिमा विधान, लक्षणों की पुष्टि के उदाहरण हैं।

लंका में भी मूर्तिकला का स्पष्ट प्रमाण मिलता है। रावण के शयनागार हाँथी दाँत, सोने, चाँदी मणियुक्त प्रवाल आदि मूर्तियों से सुसज्जित किया गया था (५·९ २३)। ये सभी तथ्य कला, सौन्दर्य की लोकप्रियता दर्शाते हैं। रावण के पुष्पक विमान के खम्भों पर सुन्दर नारियों की मूर्तियाँ देदीप्यमान थीं। श्रेष्ठ हंसों द्वारा आकाश में ढोये जाते, विमान भाँति जान पड़ता था। निश्चय ही यह आधार भारतीय कला में शालभंजिकाओं के निर्माण में सहायक हुआ। शुंग, कुषाण कला में इसके सुन्दर रूप देखते ही बनते हैं।

नारीप्रवेकैरिव दीप्यमानम्।
हंसप्रवेकैरिव बाह्यमानम्॥ ५ ७ ७

लंका के रथों में नाना प्रकार के मुखों वाले गधों, मृगों, सिंहों के मुखों से सुसज्जित होने की बातें कही गयी हैं। (मृग सिंह मुखैर्युक्तं खरैः कनकभूषितैः ६·५१·२८) ये इहामृग कहे गये हैं। खम्भों पर अद्भुत पशु, पक्षी, मूंगे के पक्षी, रत्नों के सर्प, भेड़ (५ ९ १३) आदि बने थे। इस तरह के इहामृग भरहुत, साँची बोधगया आदि के तोरणों पर अधिकाधिक संख्या में निर्मित किये गये हैं। ये काल्पनिक पशु, पक्षी कला के सौन्दर्य को बढ़ाने में समर्थ हैं।

रावण के पुष्पक विमान को आकाश में ढोने वाले निशाचरों को बड़े पेट वाले कुण्डलधारी कहा गया है (५ ८·७)। ठीक ऐसे ही निशाचर बड़े पेटवाले, कुण्डल धारी बौने कद के साँची स्तूप के कैपिटल के भार को ढोते हुये दिखाये गये हैं। शुंगकालीन प्रथम शताब्दी ई० पू० के, भारतीय शिल्पियों ने रामायण में वर्णित स्वरूपों को मूर्तियों में उरेह कर अपनी कला-कौशल की सूझ-बूझ का सफल परिचय दिया है। पाषाण, धातु, काष्ठ आदि की निर्मित मूर्तियों का विवरण, रामायण में पर्याप्त रूप में मिलता है। इससे प्रभावित होकर शुंग, कुषाण, गुप्त तथा मध्यकालीन भारतीय शिल्पियों ने अपनी कला में सर्वोत्कृष्ट प्रमाण प्रस्तुत किये हैं जो आज भी अनेक स्थानों पर द्रष्टव्य है।

संक्षेप में कहना यह है कि रामायण चित्रकला, स्थापत्यकला, मूर्तिकला, प्रतिमा विज्ञान आदि अर्थात् शिल्प के विविध आयामों की सामग्री से परिपूर्ण है। शिल्पियों के लिये भी यह वैसा ही आधार ग्रन्थ था जैसा कि रामकथा बाद के कवियों के लिये। दोनों ने इसका भरपूर उपयोग अपने-अपने क्षेत्र में किया है।

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ABDUCTIONS OF SĪTĀ (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO BHARAT KALA BHAVAN PAINTINGS)

T. K. Biswas

Bharat Kala Bhavan possesses a huge collection of paintings on the *Rāmāyaṇa*. These paintings cover the major artistic trends namely, Mughal, Rajasthani, Pahari South Indian and even the so called Bengal School. There are uncounted varsions of the *Rāmāyaṇa*. Every language in India has its own *Rāmāyaṇa*. Like every language nearly every region in India attempted to express the lyrical and scintillatting events of the *Rāmāyaṇa* in its own characteristic manner through the various mediums of art.

The *Rāmāyaṇa* was compiled quite early. But for reasons unknown, in early Indian art, the lesser epic did not receive the desired amount of attention. To be precise, the proper recognition to the ***Rāmāyana*** was vouchsafed at ***Kailāśanātha*** temple at Ellora, The phenomenal popularity, thereafter, of this epic was noticed among the mediaeval painters in India. These painters, belonging to the different geographical zones, were reared up in various surroundings and were trained under uncommon teachers. The works of illustration with particular reference to the *Rāmāyaṇa* continued for centuries. Therefore, though working on a common theme, due to the obvious impact of ***sthāna***, ***kāla*** and ***pātra***, these painters came out with such composition which were never been identical. Each illustrated manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa* maintained its own distinctiveness and approach. An analysis is attempted in the following lines to study a few illustrations on the ***Abductions of Sita*** and that too with the available paintings in Bharat Kala Bhavan.

Before *Rāvaṇa* abducted Sītā, she was earlier once abducted by a ***rākshasa*** called ***Virādha***. This episode finds descrip-

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tion in *Vālmīki's Rāmāyaṇa* (*Āraṇya Kāṇḍa*, 4th *Sarga* and verses 5-33). After meeting sage *Atri*, when Rāma, *Lakshmaṇa* and *Sītā* entered deep into the *Daṇḍaka* forest, they confronted a terrible giant, *Virādha*. The demon was terrific in look, had a wide mouth and fierce belly. He held a long spear in which dead bodies of three lions, four tigers, two wolves, ten spotted deers and the head of a huge elephant were seen affixed, presumably these would be shortly eaten up by this carnivorous demon.

Virādha forcibly took *Sītā* away and declared that this woman would be his wife. Rāma, for a short while, plunged into deep despair seeing his wife in the arms of the demon. Enraged Rāma, to retrieve his wife, decided to punish the *rākshasa*. He raised his bow and had shot seven arrows in quick succession and these wounded the demon badly. Reasonably injured *Virādha* leaving *Sītā* on the ground, vigorously attacked the epic heroes with his spear. *Rāma* threw another arrow that did cut off the shaft of the spear in two pieces. Thereafter, a grim battle followed. Unable to subdue the demon in war, the epic heroes buried him alive. When the burial pit was being dug for the mortally wounded demon, the latter exposed his real identity. He said that in his previous birth he was a *gandharva* and his name was *Tumburu*. For his lascivious attempts on *apsarā Rambhā*, he was cursed by *Kubera* to be born as a *rākshasa* in this life. The demon was further informed that he would be redeemed as and when *Rāma* of *Ikshvāku* family would kill him in the battle.

Bharat Kala Bhavan has in its collection four paintings that hail from three centres of art viz., from Malwa, Kulu (Shangri) and Kangra. The manuscript from Malwa is not complete. It has sixty illustrated pages. Painted in the first half of the 17th century (1640 A.D.), this incomplete set includes a page where the killing of *Virādha* is depicted by the epic heroes. The identification of this page became very handy since its identity is inscribed at its back. The painting depicts

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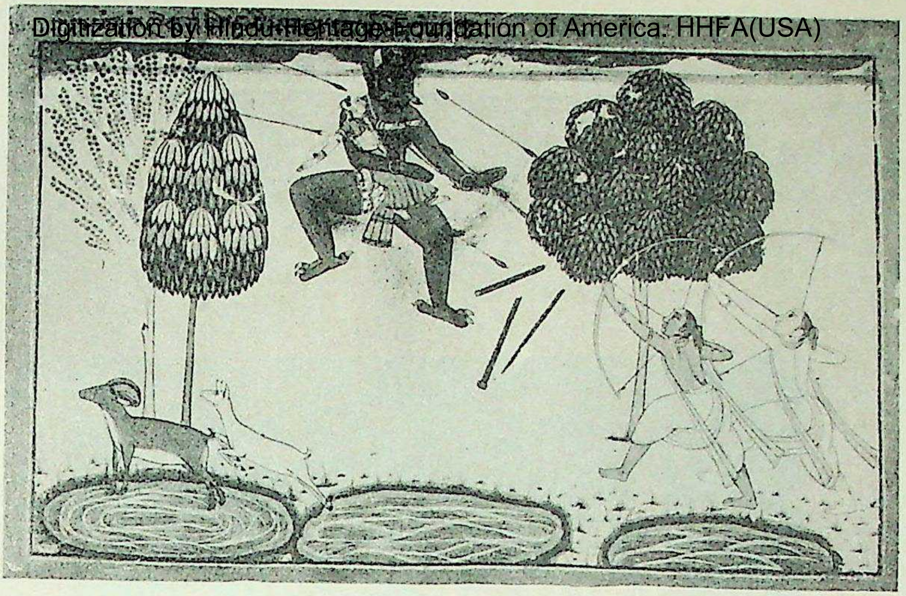

Fig. 1. 'A fierce battle in Progress', Malwa Painting, 17th Century A. D.

Fig. 3. "A pair of galloping Dondey", Mughal style Painting, Acc. No. 5423, Bharat Kala Bhavan.

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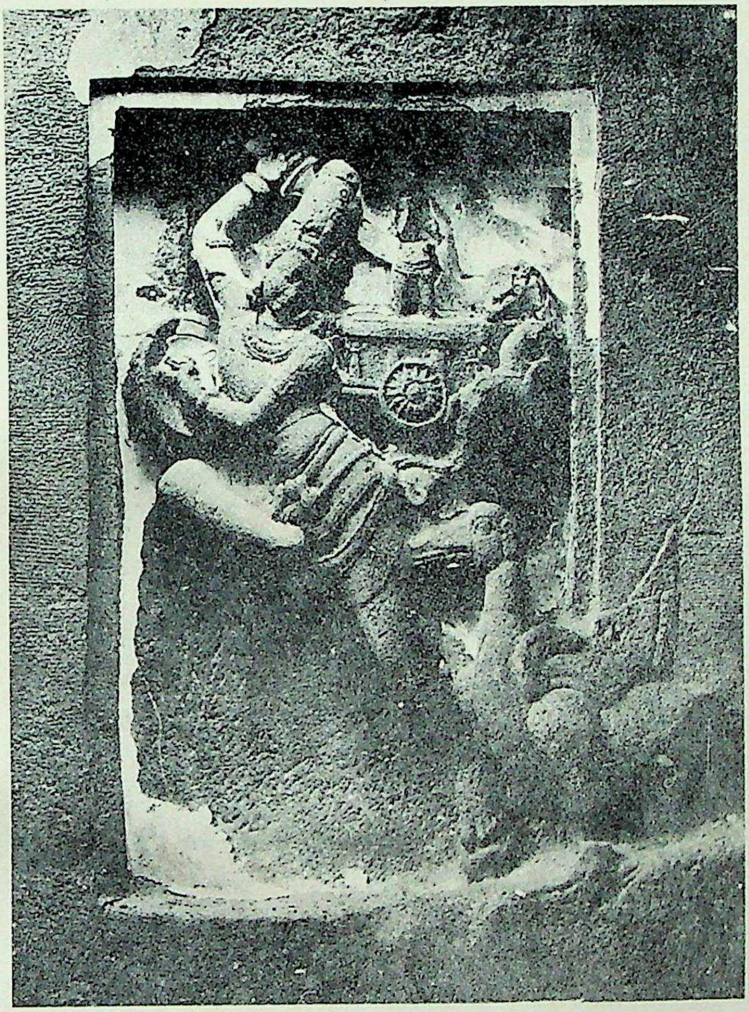

Fig. 2. "Attempt on stone to depict this event". Kailash-nath temple, Ellora, 8th Century, A. D.

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the last part of the story when the tension of terrible war was dialated considerably. In this folio, the mortally wounded demon shows awkwardly reclining after being shot by an arrow in the middle of his chest. The blood oozes out of his wound. His tongue is portruded out and is still holding the spear with the pierced bodies of dead animals. Amazed at by witnessing the supra human power of ***Rāma***, ***Sītā*** standing before him, folds her hands and salutes him. ***Rāma***, the hero of the drama, looks up with an intention to receive oblation from a monkey who was equally convinced of supra-human fit in Rāma (Pl. 1).

The epic heroes here do not look tired. Instead they are delineated with evident conviction and resolute temper. The ***vibhatsa*** part of the story has been fittingly given a blue cack-drop and heroic convictions of two brothers were adjusted against a red background. The artist appears to have been more interested in playing with a limited number of colours and in the distribution of space. This is evident indifference on the part of the painter in working out pleasing and proportionate human forms.

Of the few dispersed pages of Shangri (Kulu) ***Rāmāyaṇa***, there is a beautiful painting that illustrates a mighty encounter between epic heroes on the one hand and the demon ***Virādha*** on the other (Acc. No. 11098). Bordered in red and against the back drop of yellow, the painter documented a fierce battle in progress (Fig 1). By incorporating two stylised trees, the painter wanted to mean the locale being a jungle and that too, nearby a few stylised ponds by which two deers are shown standing awe-strucked and with wooden stillness. The giant-stature of the demon has been very aptly shown with a tiny figure of Sītā in his lap. ***Virādha*** is shown in this as suspended in the void and from the diagonally apposite areas on earth, the two epic heroes are seen discharging arrows towards the demon in suspension. A vertical line is always less powerful than a diagonal one. The diagonal movement of the arrows as well as the diagonally adjusted warring heroes

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brought forth effortlessly an air surcharged with tremendous force. The warmth of the situation has been suitable alleviated by using the yellow colour in the background.

Two more sketches drawn in *sindurī kalam* with this theme are there in Bharat Kala Bhavan (Acc. Nos. 2012 & 2235). These two pages belong to a large manuscript of the *Rāmāyaṇa* sketches numbering a few more than seven hundred. The lines of these two sketches that depict the episode of *Virādha* in continuous narration are reasonably faint but the fight between epic heroes and *Virādha* are treated in more detail than in the paintings considered earlier. Drawn by a Kashmiri Brahmin *Sudarśana* for the artist Rānjha, during the reign of Raja Bhupandra Pal in V.S. 1873, the lines are at once swift and steady. Intended to be filled in by colours later on, these sketches adjusted the notion of time and space with calculated composions. The texts of these are written on the back in Sanskrit and Hindi mixed with Punjabi dialect.

Abduction of *Sītā* by Rāvaṇa has been one of the most popular events in the *Rāmāyaṇa* and that moment during the abduction of *Sītā* appealed most to our traditional artists when the vulture king *Jaṭāyu* tried to frustrate that attemp. This part of the story involves an intense feeling of devotion in Jaṭāyu that moved every one including the painters. *Vālmīki* described this great event in the *Araṇya Kāṇḍa Sarga* 57, verses between 1–46. The story is well known and therefore, requires hardly any repetition. However, in short, the story moves round the vulture king *Jaṭāyu* who inspite of his old age tried his best to obstract the abduction of *Sītā* and in doing so, he waged a fierce battle with Rāvaṇa and was, finally mortally wounded.

A number of painting belonging to different schools of art are there in the Bharat Kala Bhavan. Before considering these paintings, the reference may be made of a superb sculpture in relief on the south wall of the *Gudha-maṇḍapa* of *Kailāsanatha* temple at Ellora dated circa 8th century A.D.

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(Pl. 2). This was, perhaps, one of the earliest, if not earliest, attempt on stone to depict the event (Fig. 2). Framed within a rectangle, the unknown Rāshṭrakūṭa sculptor while composing the theme, could not accommodate *Jaṭāyu* within it and therefore, he crossed the frame to relieve the rear part of the mighty bird. Curiously enough, the composition, instead of being distorted, turned into a fascinating and catchy composition. Against the severely plain black-ground, *Rāvaṇa's* aerial chariot is found to be delineated in profile drawn by galloping donkeys (?) while the torso of *Sītā* is shown standing as a helpless lone spectator of the fight. *Rāvaṇa's* figure predominates the composition and the sculptor endowed this figure with agile and sweeping movement, the moment before charging *Jaṭāyu* with violent downward thrust with his sword while *Jaṭāyu* is seen attacking *Rāvaṇa* with his wings raised. The vulture king at the same time violently pecking the demon king with his strong beak The sculptor is found to be successful in bringing an air of war charged with adequate tension. The momentory agitation is detected also in the face of the bird.

Of the paintings on this theme that are in the collection of Bharat Kala Bhavan, mention may be made of a painting (Acc. No. 5423) belonging to the so-called popular Mughal style. Painted in the last decade of the 16th century, this painting lays bare the landscape of a hilly terrain with sparing stylised trees here and there through which Rāvaṇa is driving his chariot with a pair of galloping donkeys (Fig. 3). While the profile of helpless *Sītā* painted in profile with adequate nervous tension. *Jāṭāyu* on the other hand is seen gliding down with a ferocious speed spreading his mighty wings to challenge *Rāvaṇa* (Pl. 3). His fearful claws, open mouth with sharp beaks and agitated eyes reveal how much he was charged with tension. The artist appears to have paid more attention on the movement of the bird. In comparison, the ten headed *Rāvaṇa* his chariot were given comparatively less attention. The faces of *Rāvaṇa* are less perturbed and while hitting the bird

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with a long sword, he hardly gathers that amount of force with which he should have been portrayed.

Inspired to certain extent by the Malwa idiom, the Kota school bequeathed a painting showing the abduction of *Sītā* (Acc. No. 10627). Painted within a square format, the composition could not bring in the dramatic sequence in it. The theme presented here is more of a decorative one and is less naturalistic. *Rāvaṇa* projected here as a bearded mendicant who with his two raised hands is charging the vulture king with a sharp spear while he carrys *Sītā* on a wallet that hangs from his left shoulder. The profile of *Sītā* is seen within the wallet seriously concerned about the would be consequences of this abduction. The chariot of *Rāvaṇa* is conspecuous by its absence (Fig. 4).

In this composition, the figures of *Rāvaṇa* and *Jatāyu* including the lone architecture are decidedly decorative inclusions. The artist appears to have been indifferent of proportion, perspective and emotional involvement of the theme. He was more interested in bringing out a decorative symmetry and balancing a limited number of colour tones. The dress and ornament, architectural setting etc. belong to the time when this painting was done.

The early 18th century artist of Kulu (Shangri) Rāmāyaṇa, decided to show a fierce and close combat between the king of Laṅkā and the vulture king (Acc. No. 110098). In this painting, (Fig. 5) the extraordinary power of *Rāvana* has been attributed by including ten resolutely stubborn heads and twenty powerful arms. In spite of that, *Jaṭayu* charges violently, mutilates some of the weapons of *Rāvaṇa* and is fiercely packing and clawing the demon king. *Rāvaṇa* on his part, is seen dangerously kicking the bird and is trying to hit hard with some of his offensive weapons on the different parts of *Jaṭāyu's* body. *Sītā* moves presently away and while doing so, she looks back and became nearly startled seeing the nature of this grim battle. The nervous tensions in *Sītā* are ably reflected by her helpless stare and by her hand postures (Fl. 5).

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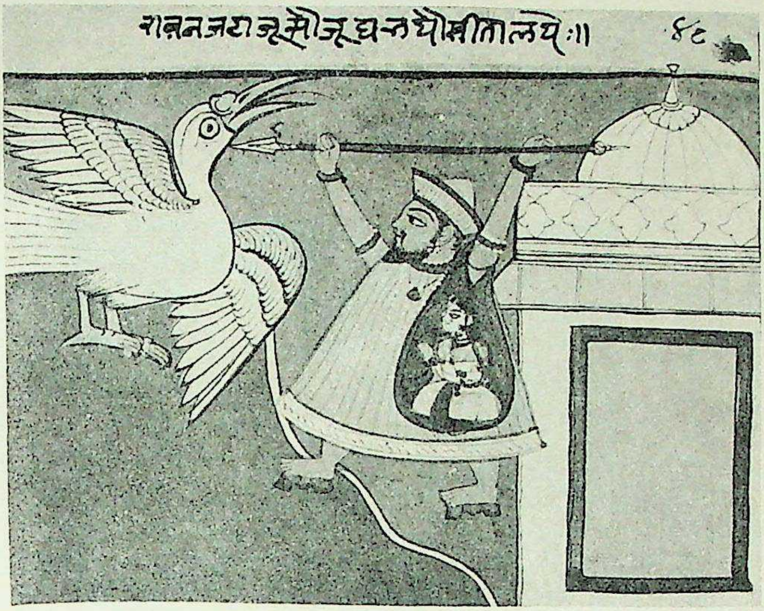

Fig. 4. "Rāwana fighting Jatayu", Painting Kota School, Acc. No, 10627, Bharat Kala Bhavan.

Fig. 5. "Rāvana fighting Jatayu", Painting in Kulu Ramayana, 18th Century A. D., Bharat Kala Bhavan.

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Fig. 6. "Rāvana fighting Jatāyu", painting, Jamini Ray, Bharat Kala Bhavan.

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Of late, Jamini Roy painted one such painting in his own characteristic manner (Acc. No. 4927). Against the background of red, his composition included the ten headed and twenty armed *Rāvana* in the middle being flanked on either side by a chariot with *Sītā* and Jaṭāyu, with a huge mouth guarded by powerful beaks (Fig. 6). The mouth of Jaṭāyu, is drawn in such a way as if he would devour *Rāvaṇa* completely. Roy's painting is essentially two dimensional. Inspired by the painting of Sunayani Devi in particular and Bengal's folk art in general, Roy infused in this composition certain amount of urban sophistication. The painting appears as an aristocratic folk art. He appears to have been more concerned in symmetry and decorative forms and therefore, he simplified the figures. One misses here the required tension, emotion and above all the devotional aspect in the theme. One does not hear either the noises of a gruelling dual nor one does detect the psychological effects of a combat on the faces of the dramatist personae.

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IMPACT OF RĀMA'S STORY ON BUDDHIST LITERATURE & ART

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The Indian Culture has two streams, usually called Brāhmaṇic culture and the other Śramaṇic. Both these cultural trends flourished side by side for centuries and have left impacts on our civilization. While the Brāhamaṇic tradition believes in the existence of God, advocates the theory of incarnation, also holds unflinching faith in the authority of the Vedas and follows the Varṇāśrama-dharma; as against this, the Śramaṇic tradition does not attach any credence to God nor does it recognise the authority of the Vedas or the Varṇāśrama-dharma. It rather advocates the theory of '*Karmavāda*' and holds the view that an individual can become low or high by his own deeds. God or sacred scriptures cannot come to his help unless he helps himself. The 'Reality of Things' can be understood in true perspective only by his own efforts. Although these two traditions appear diagonally opposite in their stand-points, it is interesting to notice that both have influenced each other which have been manifested on almost all the spheres of our civilization. As our ancient monuments present the facts, it appears that the Śramaṇic tradition, i.e. Jaina & Buddhist, has widely influenced our society for centuries. The Buddhist stream of culture has rather been more powerful than its other colleague, the Jaina. Buddhism not only widely became a most popular religion in the country, it also spread in a number of countries outside India.

There will be no exaggeration if we venture to say that there is no greater theological personality in Hindu pantheon than Rāma who has been immensely powerful in shaping the Hindu society, exactly as we find the Buddha in the Buddhist society of the word. The *Rāmāyaṇa* which relates the story of Rāma is not only an excellent literary piece of work, but it

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is one of the most sacred texts of the Hindus. Its devotional impact has been overwhelming, sometimes, probably more than the Vedas on the minds of general public. The story of Rāma has influenced our art, architecture, history and culture and has been a source of inspirational and ideological theme for the people for centuries.

Scholars have attempted to evaluate the mutual impacts of Buddhism and Hinduism in the spheres of philosophy, literature, language, art and architecture etc. We know, Buddhism has excercised greater influence on all these fields; and even the Buddha has attained a place in Hindu pantheon as one of the incarnations of Vishnu, exactly as Rāma, who is also an earlier incarnation. We find a very high veneration for Rāma, in Hindu society not a whit less than what Buddha has wielded in the Buddhist society. It is but natural to trace if Rāma has had any cognizable impact on Buddhist art, architecture and literature.

The earliest literature of the Buddhists is said to be the *Pāli Tripiṭaka*. It is conspicuous to note that we find no reference to Rāma or Rāma's story, as it comes in the *Rāmāyaṇā*, in the older texts of *Pāli Trīpiṭaka*. The name of Rāma appears to have been popular as it occurs as a part of the names of some persons or places, for instance, we get the reference to Uddaka Rāmaputta as an ascetic, or Rāmagāma as the capital town of the Koliyas. It is only in the *Jātaka Atthakathā* (Commentary) that we come across the two such stories which refer to some events, personages and places as found in the *Rāmāyaṇa*; but there too entirely in a different way. These two Jātaka stories are : 1. Dasaratha Jātaka, 2. Mahājanaka Jātaka. While the Dasaratha Jātaka illustrates the *Prajnā Pāramitā* (Perfection in wisdom), the Mahājanaka Jātaka expounds the *Vriya-Pāramitā* (Perfection in Prowess) as in tune with the purpose of the expositions of the Jātakas in the Commentaries (*Aṭṭhakathā*). Both these Jātakas portray altogether different stories and different persons who do not at all occur in the *Rāmayaṇa*.

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Rāma, Sītā, Lakkhaṇa and Bharata are mentioned in the Dasaratha Jātaka Commentary; while in the Mahājanaka Jātaka Commentary only Janaka is known as the king of Mithilā in Videha country. There is only one late Pali book of about 17th century A.D., the *Cūllavaṃsa*, written in Sri Lanka, which mentions the story of Rāma and Rāvaṇa.[1] So far as the Buddhist Sanskrit literature is conserned we do not find any reference to Rāma or of his episodes. It is only the *Laṅkāvatārasūtra* which mentions the name of Laṅkā, relates the advent of the Buddha there and rather deals in philosophical matters. It is thus obvious that the Rāma's story as popularised by the *Rāmāyaṇa* does not get any significant place in the Buddhist literature holds, although it should have had considering the popularity and importance of the Rāmāyaṇa and of Rāma as a theological hero. It appears that the impact of Rāma's story on the Buddhist society was rather too little.

Why Rāma's story could not exercise its desirable influence on the Buddhist literature and society is matter of our investigation. It is also worth mentioning that no where the Buddhist sculpture or painting possesses any figure of Rāma. It is only in Nālandā ruin where we find some stone pannels, though studded in later ages, on the lower base of a temple.[2] Some have called this 'Hindu temple'. This temple, although originally a Buddhist temple, is supposed to be the temple of Siva by some scholars.[3] Out of 210 panels only four or five have been tentatively associated with Rāma or his story. At one place (Panel–78) Rāma and Śiva are said to have been depicted. Similarly Panel No. 4 is associated with the story of Ahalyā. While panel No. 103 is recognised as Rāma in the forest wearing a typical *Channavīra*, in one of the panels (No. 102) Rāvaṇa is said to be threatening Sītā in

1. Cf. Ch. LXIV. 42; LXVIII. 20; LXXV. 50; LXXXIII. 46,69,88, and also see G.P. Malasekera : *Dictionary of Pali Proper Names*, Vol. I, p. 901.
2. For details see : *Journal of U. P. Historical Society*, Vol. XXIII, pt. 1–2 (1950) pp. 198–212.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 198.

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which Rāvaṇa is depicted as having three heads and six arms and Sītā is seen frightened.[1] This temple site was probably a Buddhist temple in origin and only in later times it was rennovated by someone in 7th century A D. as indicated by the epigraph available there; and then, in order to decorate the whole lower portion of the temple, panels were either collected from an old Hindu temple or from somewhere else and fixed there indiscriminately as decorative pieces. It is also remarkable to notice that some of the panels have no carvings at all and have been left barren (Nos. 28,31,34,52,74,158,192,206) and many contain only floral designs. Only two Jātaka scenes are there. Hindu Gods like Śiva, Pārvati, Brahmā, Agni, Kārtikeya, Kubera, Balarāma etc. are portrayed independently. Obviously no theocratic scheme or system is adopted there for fixing these stone panels. It is well-known that Nālandā was an imortant Buddhist monastery renowned for being a seat of higher Buddhist learning and religion and so the scholars have not been able to discern any plausible reason for these panels which depict Hindu Gods and Goddesses but studded in a Buddhist temple.

We have seen above, as in literature so also in the Buddhist art Rāma's story is almost absent. Except these few panels at Nālandā Temple, no sculpture has yet been recovered from any Buddhist site where Rāma's story is depicted. Obvious enough there stand basic theological differences between Hinduism and Buddhism and hence it is not at all surprising not to find Rāma depicted in Buddhist art. But we may explore some deeper meaning also.

In Buddhist ethico-philosophical tenets there are three types of 'thought consciousness' which determine our personality. These three are : 1. *Kusala* (Good), 2. *Akusala* (Bad) and 3. *Kiriyā* (Nuetral). For arising the 'good thought conscious-

1. I am informed by Sri Krishna Deva, the well known art critic and archaeologist that a donkey is seated on the central head of Rāvaṇa and his other heads and hands could not be seen.

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ness' (*Kusala-citta*) three 'good roots' or *Hetus* are to be present. So also three 'Bad roots' or *Hetus* are the prerequisites for arising *Akusala-Citta* or 'Bad thought consciousness'. The 'good' class of thought consciousness (*Kusala*) is that which has arisen on account of any three 'good-*Hetus*' or roots. The three 'good' *Hetus* are : *Alobha* (Self sacrificingness or non-greed), *Adosa* (Goodwill or friendliness); and *Amoha* (insight or brightness of mind). Contrary to these *Kusala-hetus*, the 'bad' class of thought consciousness is rooted in any of the three *Akusala-hetus* or bad-roots. The *Akusala-hetus* are enumerated as *Lobha* (greed), *Dosa* (hatred, anger, enemosity) and *Moha* (dullness, delusion, indolence, decеption). The 'bad class of consciousness' is regarded as 'immoral' or '*akusala*'; and it can never be operative without accompanying *Moha* (delusion). As the root supports and nourishes and maintains a tree so also these '*hetus*' are to function for arising 'good' or 'bad' thought consciousness. It is also remarkable to note that all 'good' or 'bad' deeds are motivated by our corresponding 'good' or 'bad' thought consciousness. In the *Dhammapada*, the very first *Gāthā* represents the same as : "*Manopuvaṅgamā manoseṭṭhā manomayā manasā ce paduṭṭhena bhāsati vā karoti vā. Tato naṃ dukkhaṃ anveti vahoto cakkaṃ padaṃ ti*. That is "Mind is the precurser, supreme, overwhelming and any one who speaks or acts by 'evil' mind is followed by 'misery' (*Dukha*) like the wheel of a cart that follows the feet of the bull".

Thus, any kind of killing or intrigue for killing or any such immoral act is essentially motivated by the "*akusala*' *hetus* and thereby categorised as 'bad' or 'immoral'. The story of Rāma as narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* is looked upon entirely by a point of view by the Buddhists entirely different from the Hindu point of view. As a matter of fact the Buddhist psycho-ethical principles are based on pure mental phenomenal factors. Accordingly any act howsoever philanthropical or good it may appear, nevertheless if it involves any sort of killing or ill-will or greed, it cannot be regarded as 'good' for it presu-

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pposes the existence of 'bad' or *akusala hetu* or *hetus*, like *Lobha*, *dosa* or *moha*. These *hetus* must be present otherwise acts cannot be performed, Rāma's act as narrated in the *Rāmāyaṇa* are dipicted as 'essentially good', for the benefit of the people at large. Battle between Rāma and Rāvaṇa, killing of Bāli or sanctioning Lakṣmaṇa for mutilating the nose of Sūrpanakhā or such similar acts are undoubtedly done for the welfare of the people. His other deeds are also commendable and praiseworthy, of course, from the Hindu point of view. But when we venture to judge them from the Buddhist ethical standpoint, these acts cannot be placed in the category of '*Kusala-kamma*' in true sense. Those acts of Rāma like killing of a demon or any other henious person, of course, was motivated for the good of many, certainly a philanthropic deed. But such acts can only be performed when the *akusala-hetus* are present. These deeds cannot be listed as '*kusala*', rather they belong to '*akusala*' category having *akusala-hetus* like *Dosa* and *Moha*, which are the 'bad' tendencies of mind.

The Buddhist standpoint of 'good' and 'bad' act is explicit, precise and unambiguous. Accordingly any person who indulges any kind of *akusala-kamma* cannot be regarded as 'perfect'. A 'perfect' person is one who is free from all kinds of *akusala* tendencies of mind or 'bad' *hetus*. In Buddhist mythohology Rāma is, therefore, considered as a Bodhisattva, i.e. a person yet to become 'perfect', still striving to become 'perfect' or Buddha, It appears that probably because of this standpoint of the Buddhists, the story of Rāma could not get popularity either in literature or in art or architecture as it should have for Rāma being so important a figure in the sister religion of the country; although it gathered importance and popularity in some foreign Buddhist countries, like Thailand, but there too is a Bodhisattva only. This basic ideological and ethical factor should be regarded as the cause of conspicuous absence of Rāma's story in Buddhist literature and art.

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क्या राम प्रागैतिहासिक हैं ?

जगन्नाथ पाल

किसी भी धर्म में ईश्वर की ऐतिहासिकता प्रमाणित करने का प्रयास नहीं किया गया है। राम ईश्वर हैं इसलिए राम की ऐतिहासिकता का प्रयास करना भी व्यर्थ है। लेकिन राम ऐसे ईश्वर हैं जो मनुष्य के लिए आदर्श हैं, और उनसे जुड़े हुए क्षेत्र और स्थल अभी भी जीवित हैं इसलिए विद्वानगण उनकी ऐतिहासिकता खोजने का प्रयास कर रहे हैं। राम के क्रमशः विकसित चरित्र-मानव, महमानव और ईश्वर के अनुरूप ही राम की कथा भी संभवतः मानव कथा, पौराणिक गाथा और मोक्ष प्रदायनी आराध्य देव की कथा के रूप में विकसित हुई।

महर्षि वाल्मीकि रामकथा का वर्णन इस प्रकार करते हैं मानो यह कथा उनके समय में लोककथा बन चुकी थी। वाल्मीकि के इस कथा की रचना के बाद समय-समय पर इसके कलेवर में वृद्धि होती रही। बालकाण्ड के प्रारम्भिक सर्गों में ही इस कथा का कई बार उल्लेख यह आभास दिलाता है कि रामायण की रामकथा का विकास एक दीर्घकालीन प्रक्रिया का प्रतिफल है।

यद्यपि बालकाण्ड रामायण रचना क्रम में काफी बाद का माना जाता है लेकिन श्रृंगवेरपुर, नन्दिग्राम, अयोध्या, भरद्वाज आश्रम, मिथिला, काशी, मगध, गिरिव्रज, विशाला, सरयू, गंगा, सोन, कोशिकी आदि के वर्णन से स्पष्ट है कि राम के प्रारम्भिक जीवन का क्रिया क्षेत्र मध्य गंगाघाटी थी। अयोध्या काण्ड में भी श्रृंगवेरपुर, प्रयाग, भारद्वाज आश्रम, सरयू, तमसा, गोमती, स्पन्दिका, गंगा के उल्लेख इसी क्षेत्र से उनके वनगमन का वर्णन करते हैं। राम के इस क्रिया क्षेत्र की प्रागैतिहासिक संस्कृतियों का संक्षिप्त अनुशीलन करना ही इस लेख का उद्देश्य है।

मध्य गंगा घाटी की प्राचीनतम संस्कृति उच्चपूर्व पाषाण काल और मध्य-पाषाण काल के संक्रमण काल की संस्कृति है, जिसके प्रमाण वाराणसी जिले में गढ़वा, इलाहाबाद जिले में कुढ़ा और अहिरी तथा प्रतापगढ़ जिले में सुलेमान पर्वतपुर और मन्दाह से प्राप्त हुए हैं। ये स्थल धनुषाकार झीलों या धनुषाकार झीलों से निकलने वाली छोटी नदियों के किनारे स्थित हैं। यहाँ पर पूर्ण निर्मित पाषाण उपकरणों के साथ निर्माण की विभिन्न अवस्थाओं में उपकरण, कोर और फलक स्पष्टतः यह बताते हैं कि इनका निर्माण यहीं पर किया गया था। पाषाण का निकटतम श्रोत विन्ध्य क्षेत्र है, सम्भवतः विन्ध्य क्षेत्र से पाषाण कालीन मानव पत्थरों के पिण्ड लेकर गंगाघाटी में आता था और उपकरणों का निर्माण करके शिकार करता था। ये उपकरण चर्ट पत्थर पर बनाये गये हैं जिन पर अत्यधिक रासायनिक काई लगी

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हुई है। उपकरणों में ब्लेड, भूथड़े ब्लेड, तक्षणी, नोक, खुरचनी, अर्द्धचन्द्र आदि उल्लेखनीय हैं।

मध्य गंगाघाटी की इस प्राचीनतम संस्कृति ने पाषाण कालीन मानव के ऋतुनिष्ठ प्रव्रजन का भारत में प्राचीनतम प्रमाण प्रस्तुत किया है जब कि बदलती हुई जलवायु में सूखे की विभीषिका से बचने के लिए मनुष्य जीविका की तलाश में नदी घाटियों को पार करता हुआ उत्तर की तरफ आया।

सांस्कृतिक अनुक्रम में उपरोक्त संस्कृति के बाद जिस संस्कृति के प्रमाण मिलते हैं उसे मध्य पाषाण संस्कृति के नाम से जाना जाता है।[२] इस काल के जीव और वनस्पति जगत के अध्ययन से प्रतीत होता है कि अब घास के मैदानों की अधिकता हो गयी थी और हिरन, भेड़, बकरी आदि छोटे आकार के जीव अधिक होने लगे थे। खाने योग्य जंगली घासों को काटने और पशुओं के शिकार करने के लिए नये प्रकार के उपकरणों की आवश्यकता हुई और मनुष्य ने अब लघुपाषाण उपकरणों का निर्माण किया। इस युग में चर्ट के अतिरिक्त चेल्सिडनी, अगेट, कार्नेलियन, क्वार्टज आदि पत्थरों का प्रयोग उपकरण निर्माण के लिए होने लगा। उपकरण प्रकारों में ब्लेड, भूथड़े ब्लेड, खुर्चनी, नोंक, अर्धचन्द्र, छिद्रक आदि सम्मिलित हैं।

मध्य पाषाणिक संस्कृति के उपकरण अत्याधिक विस्तृत क्षेत्र में सबसे अधिक स्थलों से प्राप्त हुए हैं। गंगा के उत्तर वाराणसी, इलाहाबाद, सुल्तानपुर, जौनपुर और प्रतापगढ़ ज़िले में इस संस्कृति के लगभग १९३ स्थल प्रकाश में आये हैं। इस संस्कृति के विकास की एक अवस्था में त्रिभुज और समलम्ब चतुर्भुज जैसे ज्यामितीय लघु पाषाण उपकरणों का विकास हुआ। इस आधार पर मध्यपाषाणिक संस्कृति दो चरणों में विभक्त की जाती है—१. ज्योमितीय लघुपाषाण उपकरण युक्त मध्य-पाषाणिक संस्कृति। और २ ज्योमितीय लघुपाषाण उपकरण युक्त मध्य पाषाणिक संस्कृति।

मध्य गंगा घाटी में लगभग १७२ स्थल ज्यामितीय लघुपाषाण उपकरण वाले हैं और २१ स्थल ज्यामितीय लघु पाषाण उपकरण वाले। द्वितीय चरण के तीन स्थलों सरायनाहरराय, महदहा और दमदमा का उत्खनन भी किया गया है जिससे इस संस्कृति के विविध पक्षों पर प्रकाश पड़ा है।

ये स्थल धनुषाकार झीलों के किनारे स्थित हैं। आवास क्षेत्र में बहुत से गर्त चूल्हे प्राप्त हुए हैं जिनमें जली मिट्टी के टुकड़े, पशुओं की जली हुई हड्डियाँ और राख प्राप्त होती है। इसी आवास क्षेत्र में गर्त चूल्हों के निकट ही ये अपने मृतकों को छिछली कब्रों में सांगोपांग लिटाकर दफनाते थे। सराय नाहर राय में मृतकों को पश्चिम-पूर्व दिशा में लिटाकर दफनाया गया है। इनका सिर पश्चिम की तरफ

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और पैर पूर्व की तरफ है। एक हाथ शरीर के समानान्तर और दूसरा पेट के उपर रखा हुआ है। लेकिन महदहा और दमदमा में पश्चिम-पूर्व और पूर्व पश्चिम दोनों दिशाओं में दफनाये नरकंकाल प्राप्त हुए हैं। इनके दोनों हाथ शरीर के समानान्तर रखे हुए हैं। महदहा और दमदमा में एक एक शवाधान ऐसे प्राप्त हुए हैं जिनके पैर मोड़ कर रखे गये हैं। सराय-नाहर राय की एक कब्र में एक ही साथ दो पुरुष और दो नारियों के कंकाल दफनाये हुए प्राप्त हुए हैं और महदहा में दो शवाधान ऐसे हैं जिनमें पुरुष और नारी को एक साथ रख कर दफनाया गया है। ऐसी एक कब्र के पुरुष कंकाल के गले में हड्डी के मनकों के बने हार और कान में कुण्डल हैं। इन कब्रों में पशुओं की हड्डियाँ, लघुपाषाण उपकरण और हड्डी के बने वाणाग्र भेंट सामग्री के रूप में प्राप्त होते हैं। ये कंकाल सामान्यतः १.८० मीटर लम्बे हैं। मृत्यु के समय इनकी आयु १७ से ३५ वर्ष तक थी। महदहा से दो बच्चों और एक वृद्धा का कंकाल भी प्राप्त हुआ है। तत्कालीन जीवन की दुरूहता संभवतः मनुष्यों को अधिक दिनों तक जीवित नहीं रहने देती थी।

सराय नाहरराय, महदहा और दमदमा के गर्त चूल्हों, आवास क्षेत्र और महदहा के झील के उत्खनन से गाय, बैल, भैंसा, गेंडा, हाथी, भेड़ बकरी आदि की हड्डियाँ प्राप्त हुई हैं। यहाँ का मध्य पाषाणिक मानव कछुआ, घोंघे, मछली और चिड़ियों का भी भोजन करता था। पशुओं के मांस को गर्त चूल्हों में भून कर खाया जाता था। महदहा और दमदमा से कुछ ऐसे गर्त चूल्हे भी प्राप्त हुये हैं जिनमें गीली मिट्टी का मोटा लेप लगाया गया है।

चर्ट, वेल्सिडनी, अगेट, कार्नेलियन जेस्पर और क्वार्टज पत्थरों के बने ब्लेड, भूथड़े ब्लेड, फलक तक्षणी खुरचनी, अर्द्धचन्द्र, विषमवाहु और समबाहु त्रिभुज, समलम्ब चतुर्भुज आदि उपकरण यहाँ पूर्णतः निर्मित और अर्द्ध निर्मित अवस्था में प्राप्त हुये हैं। हड्डी के बने उपकरणों में वाणाग्र, नोक, खुर्चनी, आरी, छिद्रक आदि का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है। महदहा और दमदमा से बलुआ पत्थर के बने सिल लोढ़े, अत्यधिक मात्रा में उपलब्ध हुये हैं जिससे प्रतीत होता है कि मनुष्य अब जंगली घासों के दाने पीस कर खाने लगा था। महदहा और दमदमा में घिसे हुए गेरू के बहुत से पिण्ड प्राप्त हुये हैं। गेरू पिण्डों से निकाले रंग का प्रयोग कहाँ किया जाता था इसका कोई प्रमाण नही मिला है। संभव है मनुष्य अपने चेहरे को अलंकृत करता हो या पशुओं की खालों पर चित्र बनाता हो। कुछ हड्डियों के उपकरणों पर रेखायें उत्कीर्ण करके अलंकृत किया गया है।

सराय नाहर राय के उत्खनन से एक कार्बन तिथि ८३७५+११० ई० पूर्व की प्राप्त हुई है। उच्चपूर्व पाषाण काल और मध्य पाषाणकाल के संक्रमण काल की संस्कृति और अध्यामितीय मध्यपाषाणिक संस्कृति को इस तिथि के पहले और महदहा तथा दमदमा की संस्कृति को इसके बाद का माना जा सकता है।

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मध्य गंगाघाटी की अगली संस्कृति नवपाषाणिक संस्कृति है जिसके प्रमाण बिहार के चिरांद और चेंचर तथा उत्तर प्रदेश के सोहगोरा नामक स्थलों से प्राप्त हुए हैं।[3] इस संस्कृति के लोग गोलाकार या अर्द्धगोलाकार झोपड़ियाँ बनाकर निवास करते थे। बाँस बल्ली के निसान से युक्त जली मिट्टी के टुकड़ों से लगता है कि झोपड़ियों की दीवालों को लकड़ी बाँस और घासफूस से बनाकर उनपर मिट्टी का मोटा लेप लगाया जाता था।

चिरांद से क्वार्ट्ज़ाइट, बेसाल्ट या ग्रेनाइट पत्थरों पर बने हुये सिल-लोढ़े, हथ गोले, हथौड़े और गोलाकार कुल्हाड़ियाँ प्राप्त हुई हैं।

चेल्सिडनी, चर्ट, अग्रेट आदि महान कणवाले पत्थरों पर बने समानान्तर बाहु वाले ब्लेड, खुर्चनी, बाणाग्र, खचित ब्लेड, नोक, दन्तुरित नोक अर्द्धचन्द्र छिद्रक आदि लघुपाषाण उपकरण भी यहाँ से प्राप्त हुये हैं। कुछ ज्यामितिक उपकरण भी लघुपाषाण उपकरणों में सम्मिलित हैं। घिसकर पालिश किये गये गोलाकार नव पाषाणिक कुल्हाड़ियों की संख्या चिरांद में कम है लेकिन हड्डियों और मृगश्रृंगों के बने हुए विभिन्न प्रकार के उपकरण यहाँ से प्राप्त हुए हैं। इन उपकरणों में सुई, नोक, छिद्रक, पिन पुच्छल एवं छिद्रयुक्त वाणाग्र, खुर्चनी, छेनी, हथौड़े, कुल्हाड़ियाँ आदि सम्मिलित है।

नव पाषाणिक चिराद की पात्र परम्पराओं के अध्ययन से भी इस संस्कृति के स्वरूप पर प्रकाश पड़ा है। लाल, भूरे, काले एवं काले तथा लाल पात्र परम्परा के मिट्टी के बर्तन यहाँ से प्राप्त हुए हैं। कुछ बर्तनों की ऊपरी सतह को चिकने पत्थरों से घोंट कर चिकना और चमकीला बनाया गया है। ये पात्र मुख्यतः हस्त निर्मित हैं लेकिन कुछ ऐसे पात्र भी हैं जिन्हें साधारण चाक पर धीरे-धीरे घुमाकर बनाया गया है। कुछ बर्तनों को गीली मिट्टी लगाकर ऊपरी सतह पर खुरदुरा भी किया गया है। बर्तनों को आसंजन विधि से अलंकृत करने अथवा पका लेने के बाद उन्हें खरोंचकर अलंकृत करने का प्रमाण भी प्राप्त होता है। एक पात्र पर सोलह तीलियों वाले धुरी युक्त चक्र का आरेखण उल्लेखनीय है। भूरे रंग के बर्तनों पर पका लेने के बाद लाल गेरू से चित्र बनाये गये हैं। चित्रित अभिप्रायों में एक दूसरे को आर पार काटती रेखाएँ, संकेन्द्रिक वृत्त और लहरदार रेखायें सम्मिलित हैं। एक पात्र खण्ड पर विन्दुओं से त्रिशूल का चित्र बनाया गया है। लाल गेरू से चित्रित ये अभिप्राय कभी कभी लाल तथा काले और लाल पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों पर भी प्राप्त होते हैं। चिरांद से एक पात्र खण्ड ऐसा भी प्राप्त हुआ है जिसपर चटाई की छाप है। बर्तन आकारों में चौड़े अथवा संकरे मुँह वाले गोलाकार घड़े, टोंटीदार घड़े, आधार वाले कटोरे, छिद्र युक्त, होठदार अथवा टोंटीदार कटोरे और लम्बे तथा छोटे नलीदार टोंटी के बर्तन सम्मिलित हैं।

चिरांद के नवपाषाण कालीन लोगों के कलात्मक अभिरुचि को अभिव्यक्त करने वाले उपादानों में उपरत्नों पर बने हुये सुन्दर मनके हड्डी के कुण्डल और

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झुमके, मिट्टी तथा हड्डियों की चूड़ियां, कूबड़ वाले बैल, चिड़िया तथा नाग का मृण्यमूर्तियों का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है।

अन्य नवपाषाणि संस्कृतियों की ही तरह चिराद की नवपाषाणिक संस्कृति की अर्थव्यवस्था खेती और पशुपालन पर आधारित थी। जली मिट्टी के टुकड़ों में धान की भूसी के प्रमाण प्राप्त हुये हैं। धान के अतिरिक्त गेहूँ, जौ, मूँग और मसूर से भी यहाँ के लोगों का परिचय था। गाय बैल और भैंस की हड्डियाँ प्राप्त हुई हैं जो उनके पालतू पशु रहे होंगे। इसके अतिरिक्त हाथी, गैंडा, हिरन तथा बारहसिंघा आदि जंगली जानवरों की हड्डियाँ भी उत्खनन में प्राप्त हुई हैं।

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विन्ध्य क्षेत्र और गंगा घाटी के नवपाषाणि कुल्हाड़ियों में साम्य है और एक ही तरह के लघुपाषाण उपकरण भी प्राप्त होते हैं। चिरांद में पात्रों को पकाने के बाद चित्रित भी किया गया है। लेकिन विन्ध्य क्षेत्र में पात्रों को चित्रित करने की परम्परा नहीं थी और न तो उन्हें पकाने के बाद खरोंच कर अलंकृत ही किया गया है। चिरांद में मिलने वाली मृण्मूर्तियाँ भी विन्ध्यक्षेत्र के महागड़ा कोलडिहवा और पंचोह से नहीं मिली हैं। हड्डियों के बने उपकरणों की संख्या भी विन्ध्य क्षेत्र में अधिक नहीं है। रस्सी अथवा कछुये की हड्डी का छाप वाले मिट्टी के बर्तन जो विन्ध्य क्षेत्र की नवपाषाणिक संस्कृति का चारित्रिक लक्षण है, चिरांद में भी मिलता है। उपरोक्त विश्लेषण से यही प्रतीत होता है कि चिरांद का नवपाषाणिक संस्कृति अधिक विकसित है जब कि विन्ध्य क्षेत्र की यह संस्कृति अभी भी शैशवावस्था में है।[४]

चिरांद के नव पाषाणिक धरातल से कुल ६ कार्बन तिथियाँ प्राप्त हुई हैं जिनमें से तीन तिथियाँ १५८० + ११०, १६७५ + १५५ ई० पू० को उपयुक्त माना गया है। नवपाषाणिक और ताम्र पाषाणिक धरातलों के संधिस्थल से १०५० + १६० ई० पू० की एक तिथि प्राप्त हुई है। इस आधार पर चिरांद की नवपाषाणि संस्कृति को १८०० ई० पू० से १२०० ई० पू० के मध्य रखा गया है।[५] चूँकि निचले धरातल से कोई तिथि नहीं मिलती है। इसलिये इस संस्कृति का प्रारंभ २००० ई० पू० या इससे भी पूर्व का समय देने को संस्तुति की गई है।[६] यहाँ के अवसादन दर की गणना के आधार पर इस संस्कृति का प्रारम्भ और भी पहले ४००० से ३००० ई० पू० तक प्रस्तावित किया गया है।

मध्य गंगाघाटी में ताम्रपाषाणिक संस्कृति के प्रमाण नवपाषाण संस्कृति की अपेक्षा अधिक विस्तृत क्षेत्र से उपलब्ध हुये हैं। इस संस्कृति के प्रमुख स्थलों बिहार के सोनपुर[७], चिरांद[८], ओरिअण[९], बक्सर चेचर[१०] तथा उत्तर प्रदेश के सोहगोरा[११], प्रह्लादपुर[१२], राजघाट[१३], नहुषराजाकाटीला[१४], बनवारी घाट, गुलरिहवा घाट[१५], शृंगवेर पुर[१६] उल्लेखनीय है। प्रतापगढ़ की पट्टी तहसील में हाल ही में किये गये सर्वेक्षण के परिणामस्वरूप इस संस्कृति के कई स्थल प्रकाश में आये हैं। उपरोक्त स्थलों के उत्खनन और सर्वेक्षण के परिणाम स्वरूप मध्यगंगाघाटी के प्रागेतिहासिक

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मानचित्र पर ताम्रपाषाणिक संस्कृति का स्वरूप स्पष्ट होने लगा है। इस संस्कृति की पुरातात्विक सामग्री के अन्तर्गत चाक पर बनो हुई कई पात्र परम्परायें, पत्थर और हड्डियों पर बने हुये उपकरण ताम्र उपकरण तथा लघु ब्लेड उद्योग के लघुपाषाण उपकरण सम्मिलित हैं। पात्र परम्पराओं में लाल, काले लेपवाले तथा काले-और-लाल पात्र परम्परायें, जिनमें से अंतिम दो को चित्रित भी किया गया है, सम्मिलित है। लघु पाषाण उपकरणों में दन्तुर कटक ब्लेड भी सम्मिलित हैं, हड्डियों तथा मृग सिंगों के बने हुये वाणाग्र इस संस्कृति के अभिन्न अंग लगते हैं। वाणाग्र दो प्रकार के हैं—पुच्छल और छिद्रयुक्त। अधिकतर वाणाग्रों का अनुभाग गोला है लेकिन कुछ तिकोने अनुभाग वाले वाणाग्र भी प्राप्त हुए हैं। बहुत से वाणाग्र निर्माण की विभिन्न अवस्थाओं में प्राप्त हुये हैं। इस संस्कृति के लोग भी बाँस और लकड़ी की बनी झोपड़ियों में निवास करते थे। अर्धरत्नों और मिट्टी के बने मनके इन स्थलों से बहुतायत में मिले हैं, लेकिन ताम्र उपकरणों की संख्या बहुत कम है। बिहार के ओरिअप से एक ताम्र-चूड़ी का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है। मृण्मूर्तियों में चिरांद से उपलब्ध सिररहित चपटी चिड़िया जिसे शरीर पर छिद्र करके सुसज्जित किया गया है, ओरिअप से एक आदिम शैली में बनी नारी मूर्ति तथा प्रहलादपुर से उपलब्ध खिलौना गाड़ी विशेष उल्लेखनीय है।

लाल, काले और लाल तथा काले लेप की पात्र परम्परायें इस संस्कृति कि चारित्रिक विशेषतायें मानी जाती हैं। उत्खनित स्थलों में इस संस्कृति के निचले धरातल में काले-और-लाल वर्तनों की संख्या अधिक है। चिरांद में कुछ बर्तनों पर क्रीम रंग का लेप किया गया है। वर्तन आकारों में घड़े, नाद, कटोरे और तश्तरियाँ सम्मिलित हैं। काले-और-लाल पात्र परम्परा के कुछ वर्तनों के भीतरी सतह पर सफेद या क्रीम रंग से चित्रण किया गया है। चित्रण अभिछायों में क्षैतिज अथवा तिरछी रेखायें प्राप्त होती हैं। इन बर्तनों पर चित्रण के प्रमाण सोहगौरा, प्रहलादपुर, राजघाट, नहुषराजा का टीला, बनवारी घाट तथा गुलरिहवा घाट से प्राप्त हुये हैं।

पात्रों के आकार में विविधता के प्रमाण लाल पात्र परम्पराओं में प्राप्त होते हैं— कटोरे, आधार वाले कटोरे, थालियाँ, नाद, तीन पैर वाले तथा छिद्रयुक्त कटोरे और नाद, होंठदार कटोरे और नाद, बड़े और मध्यम आकार के घड़े तथा साधार तश्तरियाँ। चिरांद में नवपाषाणिक संस्कृति की तरह इस संस्कृति में भी टोंटी दार बर्तन प्राप्त हुये हैं।

काले लेप वाले पात्र परम्परा में बर्तनों के अधिक आकार नहीं मिलते हैं। कटोरे और थालियाँ ही प्रायः इस परम्परा के बर्तन हैं। सम्भवतः इस पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों का प्रयोग खाने पीने के लिये ही किया जाता था। इसी पात्र परम्परा से परवर्ती काल में उत्तरी कृष्णा ओपदार पात्र परम्परा का विकास हुआ होगा। काले लेपवाली पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों को भी सफेद या काले रंग से चित्रित किया

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गया है। चित्रण अभिप्राय के अन्तर्गत तिरछे और छोटी तथा बड़ी रेखायें ही प्राप्त होती हैं। चित्रित काले लेप वाले बर्तन चिरांद, सोनपुर सोहगोरा, प्रहलादपुर, राजघाट, गुलरिहवा घाट, शृंगवेरपुर तथा पूरे देवजानी से प्राप्त हुये हैं।

प्रयाग विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा किये गये हाल के सर्वेक्षण से मध्य गंगा घाटी के प्रतापगढ़ जिले की पट्टी तहसील में लगभग ३० ताम्र पाषाणिक स्थल प्रकाश में आये हैं। जहाँ से लाल, काले लेपवाले लाल तथा काले-और-लाल पात्र परम्पराओं के मिट्टी के बर्तन, दन्तुर कटक ब्लेड क्रोड और फलक से युक्त लघु ब्लेड उद्योग के लघुपाषाण, मिट्टी तथा अर्धरत्नों के मनके, साँस बल्ली के निशान से युक्त जली मिट्टी के टुकड़े, ताँबे की अंगूठी तथा पत्थर के सिल लोढे प्राप्त हुये हैं।

उपलब्ध पात्र परम्पराओं में लाल, काले लेप वाले, काले-और लाल रंग के पात्र प्राप्त हुये हैं। कभी-कभी लाल पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों पर भी लेप किया गया है। काले और लाल पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों के भीतरी सतह पर काला तथा ऊपरी सतह पर लाल लेप है। काले लेप के कुछ वर्तनों के भीतरी सतह पर सफेद तथा बाहरी सतह पर काले रंग से चित्र बनाये गये हैं। चित्रण अभिछायों में खड़ी तथा तिरछी मोटी रेखायें सम्मिलित हैं। इन स्थलों से पात्रों के जो आकार उपलब्ध हुए हैं उनमें कटोरे, आधार वाले कटोरे, होंठदार कटोरे, थालियाँ, नाद, पैरवाले छिद्रयुक्त नाद, वीकर और विभिन्न आकार के घड़े उल्लेखनीय हैं। लाल पात्र परम्परा के कुछ बर्तनों की बाहरी सतह पर खड़ी या तिरछी रेखायें उत्कीर्ण कर के अलंकृत किया गया है और कभी कभी आसंजन विधि से अंगुलियाँ दबा कर रस्सी की आकृति का अलंकरणभी बनाया गया है। पात्र प्रकारों, चित्रण अभिप्रायों और लघु पाषाण उपकरणों के आधार पर मध्यगंगा घाटी के सम्पूर्ण ताम्रपाषाणिक स्थलों से इस संस्कृति का एक ही स्वरूप आभासित होता है।

मध्य गंगा घाटी की यह संस्कृति पूर्व में निम्न गंगाघाटी और दक्षिण में विन्ध्य क्षेत्र की ताम्रपाषाणि संस्कृतियों से कई सन्दर्भों में जुड़ी हुई प्रतीत होती है। निचली गंगा घाटी की ताम्रपाषाणिक संस्कृति के उत्खनित स्थल पाण्डु राजारढिवि, महिषदल और भरत पुर हैं। पश्चिमी बंगाल के वर्दवान जिले में स्थित पाण्डु राजारढिवि के उत्खनन[१७] से हस्तनिर्मित भूरे या पीताभ लाल, काले और लाल, लाल और चमकीले लाल पात्र परम्परा के बर्तन प्राप्त हुये हैं। काले और सफेद रंग से काले-और लाल तथा लाल पात्र परम्परा के बर्तनों को चित्रित किया गया है। महिषदल[१८] में भी इस परम्पराओं के बर्तनों को चित्रित किया गया है। बर्तन आकारों में कटोरे, नाद, होठदार अथवा टोंटीदार कटोरे, आधार तश्तरी और कटोरे, ढक्कन, थालियाँ, छिद्रयुक्त बर्तन तथा लम्बे गले के घड़े सम्मिलित हैं। वन्य सांस्कृतिक सामग्री के अन्तर्गत तांबे के मनके, चूड़ियाँ, नहन्नी, सुरमा-सलाई,

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कुल्हाड़ी, हड्डियों के वाणाग्र, पिन, कंघे, चूड़ियाँ, अर्द्धरत्नों के मनके, दन्तुर कटक ब्लेड से युक्त लघुपाषाण उपकरणों का उल्लेख किया जा सकता है।

चमकीली लाल पात्र परम्परा तथा पनारीदार टोंटी के बर्तनों के मध्य गंगा घाट में अनुपस्थिति के आधार पर मध्यगंगा घाटी और निम्न गंगा घाटी की संस्कृतियों को अलग-अलग मानने की सम्मति प्रस्तुत की गयी है।[१९] लेकिन कुछ स्थानीय विभेदों को छोड़कर दोनों क्षेत्रों में एक ही संस्कृति का विस्तार मानना अधिक तर्कसंगत है।

मध्यगंगा घाटी की ताम्र पाषाणिक संस्कृति को चिरांद से उपलब्ध कार्बन तिथियों के आलोक में १६०० ई० पू० से ८०० ई० पू० के मध्य रखा जा सकता है।[२०] टी०एफ० १०२८–१५४० + ९० ई० पू० टी०एफ० ४४४–७१५ + १०५ ई०पू० के आधार पर यह तिथि क्रम निर्धारित किया गया है। सोहगोरा से भी दो कार्बन तिथियाँ १३३० + ११० ई० पू० और १२३० + १३० ई०पू० प्राप्त है।

मध्य गंगा घाटी में ताम्रपाषाणिक काल के बाद प्रारम्भिक ऐतिहासिक काल का प्रारम्भ होता है जब कि लोहे का व्यापक प्रयोग होने लगता है और उत्तरी कृष्ण ओपदार पात्र परम्पराका प्रसार होता है।

रामायण संस्कृति की पुरातत्त्व के आधार पर खोज करने वाले प्रो० बी०बी० लाल के शृंगवेरपुर के उत्खनन में उपलब्ध प्रथम और द्वितीय चरण की संस्कृतियों को ताम्रपाषाणिक संस्कृति के अन्तर्गत रखा जा सकता है जिन्हें क्रमशः उष्मादीप्ति और कार्बन तिथि के आधार पर १०५०-१००० ई० पू० और ९५०-९०० ई०पू० समय दिया गया है।[२१]

मध्य गंगाघाटी की इन प्रागेतिहासिक संस्कृतियों में से क्या किसी संस्कृति को राम के काल से सम्बद्ध किया जा सकता है? इस बारे में अभी निश्चय के साथ कुछ नहीं कहा जा सकता लेकिन रामायण में आदिम संस्कृति के बहुत से अवशेष ढूँढ़े जा सकते हैं। फाल, कुदाल और हल लिए फलमूल की तलाश में घूमता गरीब ब्राह्मण[२२], श्रीराम की असंख्य गायें[२३] तमसा के तटपर रात्रि निवास करते राम के समय गायों का झुंड[२४], सरयू, गोमती और सई के समीपवर्ती क्षेत्रों में जंगल,[२५] दशरथ द्वारा सरजू के तटों पर उपद्रवकारी, जंगली भैंसों, मतवाले हाथियों और सिंह व्याध आदि जानवरों का वर्णन[२६] शृंगवेर पुर में गंगा को पार करने के बाद रामलक्ष्मण द्वारा मृगों का शिकार[२७] आदि बहुत से ऐसे उद्धरण हैं जो इस युग में प्रागेतिहासिक संस्कृति का आभास दिलाते हैं। धनुष वाण से बालक्रीड़ा करते, धनुष वाण धारण किये सीता-स्वयंवर में सम्मिलित होते, वन-वन विचरण करते, ऋषियों की रक्षा करते, धनुष बाण से आखेट करते, राम की जो छवि हमारे मानस पटल पर बनती है विन्ध्यक्षेत्र के शिला चित्रों में धनुष वाण धारण किये मनुष्यों के

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बहुत से चित्र उसी छवि का स्मरण दिलाते हैं। संभव है राम और उनका युग इतिहास के पहले के काल से सम्बद्ध हो और इतिहास काल में क्रमशः विकसित होती हुई इस कथा को कालान्तर में वर्तमान स्वरूप प्राप्त हुआ हो।

संदर्भ सूची

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